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KAKATIYA NAYAKS

THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO DAKSHINAPATHA'S INDEPENDENCE

(1300 — 1370 AD)

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IN MEMORIAM

FREEDOM FIGHTERS
AND
KISAN LEADERS
of Kakatiya Vintage

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Kakatiyas were once Jains, to whom 'Kakati' was one of the goddesses. There is also a village in Belgaum region of Karnataka, called 'Kakati'. There must have been a tribe, whose members, after having achieved some military prominance came to be identified either as the worshippers of 'Kakati' or as having sallied forth from the village 'Kakati' into their later exploits. Once they had established themselves as independent rulers of Warangal, they reinstalled their favourite *ishtadaivam*, 'Kakati' at Warangal. Subsequently when Ambadeva migrated to Bastar region and established his kingdom with Jagadalpur as his capital, he must have again installed his family deity 'Kakati' in that area too.

Dr. Parabrahma Sastri has also concluded, after his laborious study of inscriptional, scriptural and literary sources, that Kakatiyas were not *kshatriyas* in the sastraic terms. He quoted Vidyanatha's statement that their caste is above solar and lunar races of *Kshatriyas* just as the present days Nagas and other tribal people can claim to be (Kakatiyas. p.28).

Patriotic sons and daughters, young and old have to emulate the uplifting examples of Kakatiya leaders in this dangerous Nuclear Age as to how to live and die for the unity and freedom of Mother India. Rudrama Devi, died on the battle field, when she was past 80 years along with some of her generals and her patriotic peasant-soldiers; Prataparudra Deva, her grandson, embraced the waters of Narbada rather than allow himself to be presented as the vanquished before the Delhi Sultan. Kapaya, the worthy successor in the leadership of the Andhra people and their Kakatiya empire, also sacrificed his life on the battle field like their grand old Rudrama while fighting for the integrity of the Andhra Kingdom. His son Vinayak Dev allowed himself to be blown to pieces through the cruel mouth of a Sultan's gun spurning all princely offers verily they have richly deserved the annual homage be-

ing offered by Kisan youth during all these subsequent six centuries.

These patriotic rulers and heroic Nayaks rose to the heights of Kshatriyas of Mahabharata age. The venerable Bhishma found his compeer in the grand old Rudrama daughter of a great kind and exemplar of freedom fighters Prolaya, Kapaya, Vinayak Dev and their brave colleagues in the war of independence.

The Kakatiya Nayaks and their leaders, whether princes or kings were not caste-bound. To them the integrity of Andhra Kingdom and unity and continuity of Bharatiya *Dharma* were more important than either Tribal Taboos or caste conventions. They honoured prowess in warfare and scholarship and sobriety in statemanship whenever they found their recruits; in cottages, amidst fields or forests or in priestly groups. Such were the fortunate recruits as Ballaya, Jayapa, Chaunda from around Krishna river during Ganapati's campaign in Velanadu. Hemadri Reddi also achieved great fame thanks to Ganapati Deva's patronage. Both Rudrama Devi and Pratapa Rudra helped many a Reddi of village and *sthala* level of office to join the Lenka forces and achieve the status of Nayaks. Lowness of caste or tribe at birth nor poverty was allowed to thwart a warrior in gaining military power and status. Thus Gonkaya Reddi, son of Juttaya Lenka, Rudraya Lenka, Maraya Lenka, Pitcheya Lenka, Pochu Lenka, Majidue Lenka have gained recognition and Nayankaram during Pratapa Rudra's region. Ganapati Deva gave one of his daughters Rudrama in marriage to the Chalukya prince Virabhadra and another to a kisan chief. He himself married two sisters (Naramba and Peramba)of a kisan warrior-cum-scholar, Jayapa. Rudrama gave her eldest daughter Mummadamma to a Kakatiya prince Mahadeva of Kota, the second daughter Rudrama to a Yadaya Prince Ellana Deva and the third daughter Ruyyama to Induluri Chief Annaya. They were so far-sighted and far above medieval spirit of vendetta that both Ganapathi Deva and Rudrama Devi welcomed Yadava warriors into their Nayak order even though they had been at war so frequently with the neighbouring Yadavas of Devagiri.

Decentralisation of political authority and ever recurring tendency of the chief of one political centre of power to try to encroach upon the neighbouring centres was the bane of feudal system of politics in India as elsewhere. The people at large at the village and *sthala* level were accustomed to offer obeisance according to their sastraic and traditional conception of *Dharma* every feudal chief was able to arrogate to himself all the powers and privileges of a Raja irrespective of his relations with other Rajas or chiefs in that neighbourhood or that accredited kingdom. So every chief felt free and indeed felt it his kingly duty to expand his area of control or kingdom and so encroach upon as many other kingdoms as possible and both the sastraic experts and ambitious and adventurous men of military prowess used to extol the military ambition of his particular feudal chief. It was in the measure of controlling, subduing, gaining the support or allegience of as many such feudatory chiefs that the greatness, strength and right of suzereignty of a king or emperor was being respected and obeyed. Thus whenever Ganapati Deva, Maha Deva, Rudrama Devi, Prataparudra became weakened vis-a-vis their rivals like the Yadavas of Devagiri or Sultans of Delhi. Their feudatories tried to break away from their so called imperial control and declare themselves independent and wage wars against their neighbouring chiefs and occupy their forts and domains and assume the powers and privileges of kingship over the concern people. Indeed they used to raise pillars of victory. It was to prevent such mishaps or local wars that what we now call "police action" had to be taken by the king. And every Kakatiya king had had to engage himself in such wars against such ambitious local kings or chiefs with the support of loyal kings or chiefs. When thus the emperor was always dependent upon such loyal chiefs, his control or command over them could not be either complete or entirely dependable.

Fortunately there was the stable and permanent social order; that is the village level social common wealth, bound and sanctified by sastraic tradition of relative values and profession-wise rights. Dr. Parabrahma Sastri demonstrated through his valuable study how the feudal local so called

kings and emperors also Nayaks and Prataparudra's order of Lenkas were scrupulously respecting the rights of the villages as a whole; that the leaders of the people of different professions and peasants were being consulted, whenever any dispute or doubt arose over any tax or local levy or transference of lands etc., before a decision was made by the relevant (Kakatiyas, Ch. XI, pp. 179-191) government of authority. The king used to appoint an ad hoc commission to study the pros and cons of the matter in dispute, and then used to make a decision upon this report. That the commission had to go to the area concerned, make enquiries with the assistance and advice of local heads and in the presence of the local public. Sometimes, another enquiry used to be ordered also, if the report of the first enquiry is objected to and only thereafter, the ruler used to make the final decision.

The fortunes of the people at large were thus being safeguarded some what satisfactorily, despite the evils of political instability instinct in feudal order and the never forseeable and ever present threats of inter-regional feudal wars and their associated disasters.

This study of the achievements of Kakatiya Nayaks and Kakatiya regime over those three centuries helps us to understand the dangers lurking behind the contemporary demands of the twenty and odd states for more and more powers as against those of the union government. Decentralisation can be enjoyed in our democratic set up, but only upto a limited extent and never at the expense of the inalienable overall suzereignty of the union government and its supreme authority to sustain national unity and integrity. This is the lesson that our present generation of patriots can draw from the experiences and failures of Kakatiya age. This is also the lesson that Americans have learnt from their civil war of last century. Indian civilization and culture, indeed, India's political fortune and econonic progress could have been far better, if only Nayak-times decentralised multiple-centred political authority had been overcome by some central authority.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In the long course of India's history, various cadres of Indian agriculturists distinguished themselves by fighting for national freedom and resisting the imperialists or marauding invaders.

The Jats of Punjab and Sind forced Alexander, the Great, to hastily withdraw from the conquered dominions of India by their ceaseless and deadly guerilla resistance. The Rajputs and Ghurjars defended so persistently India's Independence over the prolonged period of two centuries against the repeated invasions of Muslim marauders from Iran and Afghanistan.

With the fall of Delhi into the hands of the invaders in 1194A.D. the path was kept open and continued to be broadened for successive invaders until the Mughals established their imperialistic suzerainty over northern India. But the Rajputs of Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat and Vindhya Pradesh continued their struggle for maintaining their social freedom and political autonomy within the ambit of the empire, thanks to the inspiring examples of Maharani Padmavathi Devi and Maharaja Rana Pratap, saints Mira, Kabir and Sur das.

In latter times, the Rajputs, under the leadership of Raj inha of Udaipur, Jats under Krishna of Bharatpur and Sikhst Sunder Guru Govind Singh and Maharatas under Chatrapai Shivaji, rose in revolt against the intolerable imperialistic onslaughts of Aurangazeb (1658–1707) against the Indian social customs and culture. Those revolts weakened the Mughal empire and brought into political prominence those sections of Indian kisans who took the lead in fighting the emperors. Thus, they had achieved such a distinguished place in the panorama of Indian society and in the songs, ballads and stories of their local literature that even today their successors enjoy high sense of self-confidence and pride in their heroic ancestry and, therefore, venture to provide the much-desired leadership in social and political affairs.

In the history of South India, the nayaks, war of independence against the Delhi sultans appear to have anticipated the recent patriotic fervour and movement. Whereas the earlier dynastic regimes of Pallavas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Cholas and Kakatiyas were engaging in their wars for supremacy over their predecessors-dynastic rulers, depending upon their superior armies, battle-tactics and greater fortunes, all marshalled on the basis of their dynastic prestige and leadership, the Kakatiya nayaks' war of independence was waged in the name of Andhra patriotism and Bharatiya dharma. Never before was such regional patriatism roused to such a pitch nor was dharma invoked so forcibly. nor indeed the opposing forces castigated as anti-Indian and imperialistic, as it was during the times of the Kakatiya nayaks, revolution.

It is interesting that for the first time, Kakatiya nayaks' Confederacy raised its banner of revolt and based its appeal on the patriotism of the people of Andhra and their love of Telugu literature and consequent Andhraism. That became possible because of the emergence of Telugu literature during its Chalukyan-Chola period of development from the poetry of Nanne Choda and Nannaya of Chalukyas, to Tikkana, Palkurki Somanatha and the galaxy of poets, writers and propagandists of Veera Saiva and Vaishnava movements of Kakatiya age.[1] The intellectual elite and Kshatriya-minded kisan leaders were imbued with the martial spirit and dharmic ideals of the heroes of Mahabharata and Ramayana. No wonder the Veera Saivite and Vaishnavite priests of all castes forged just in time, the needed ideological weapons of Andhraism based on geo-politics and dharma. The nayaks, who had till then been growing into a regal force but under the protection of dynastic rulers, emerged into an independent political leadership.

1. Arudra, "History of Andhra Literature - Kakatiya Era." vol.II.

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1. Sri Jakkampudi Subbarayudu - Smt. Vijayakumari
2. Sri Thummala Suryanarayana - Smt. Nirmala
3. Sri Parachuri Surendraprasad - Smt. Usharani
4. Sri Nimmagadda Lakshmana Rao - Smt Vijayalakshmi
5. Sri Yalamanchili Muralidhara Rao - Smt. Sujatha
6. Sri Inaganti Venkateswara Rao - Smt Manimala
7. Sri Tripuraneni Rajagopala Rao - Smt. Sreesha
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29. Sri Tella Tirupathiah - Smt. Tirupathiah

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with the social and political crisis that faced South India (Dakshinapath) six centuries ago and with the patriotic deeds and constructive contribution made by the valiant Kakatiya nayaks and their allies in achieving the independence of Dakshinapath. Their sacrifices and sufferings command our admiration. Patriots of subsequent ages had tried to emulate their inspiring examples and live up to their ideals of staking everything for the sake of Bharat and Bharatiya dharma. It was because of such sacrifices and loyalties that India had achieved independence, given to itself a democratic Constitution with an independent judiciary to protect the inviolability of the fundamental rights of the masses, enshrined in the Constitution.

Have we seen the end of the need for such a call for national service and patriotic sacrifices as had faced those Kakatiya nayaks? Are our national integrity, political and social freedoms and the even course of cultural progress so secure that our youths and leaders in their prime and the veteran statesmen need not have to offer their all and risk their very lives and fight with their backs to the wall as those legendary nayaks and rayas had done?

That such national crisis calling for similar sacrifices and display of such a sense of national unity, service, sufferings, sacrifices is not a thing of the past became so painfully evident at the most unexpected juncture when Red China invaded India in 1962 even while Jawaharlal Nehru was woeing her in his own passionate way despite warnings from so many of us. India is still smarting under the insult smeared on her forehead by that victorious aggressor. India has yet to recover her lost sacred territory. In just another three years thereafter, in 1965, Pakistan made her aggression more blatantly and with greater gusto than her first invasion of Kashmir, disguised as raids by the tribal Pathans. So independent India is obliged to live under such threats to her national integrity.

Our borders are becoming more and more insecure. The whole of the north-eastern regions have come to be as vulnerable as the 2,500-mile long Himalayas. Rajasthan-Cutch borders are so open. Indian Ocean is becoming the centre for international rivalries. The Indian air-horizon is fast expanding thanks to the ICBM and such other challenges of the Sputniks, Apollos and Soyuzs. So, there is need for our youths to emulate the example of Kakatiya lenkas and nayaks and join the ACC, NCC and other national discipline movements and prepare themselves to meet the present and the future challenges posed to our borders, and the ever-expanding security spheres posed by this atomic age.

It is necessary that patriots in large numbers should go to NEFA, Andamans, Laccadive islands and sandy border areas on the western Rajasthan, daring the inclemencies of weather and scarcity of water and lack of other ordinary conveniences of civilization because those vulnerable areas have to be protected from incursions of infiltrators of hostile countries on our borders.

There is need-as urgent as what faced the Kakatiya nayaks in the 14th century-for our children, youth, men and women of honour and prowess and statesmen to brace themselves up to face this ever-present and recurring call of our country to stand by her, sustain her integrity and help her to achieve protection, progress, peace and prosperity along with social justice for her masses.

This is a revolutionary path.[1] In this path by this call to duty and to this national dharma, Prolaya, Kapaya, Vinayak Dev, Anapota Reddi, Ballalas, Rayas and all their nayaks and lenkas held aloft their eternal, ever-shining and inspiring torches of freedom and honour, blazing and soul-lifting sagas of sacrifices, by placing their sacred lives at the feet of Mother India.

1. N.G. Ranga, "World role of National Revolution" (1945) and "Outlines of National Revolutionary Path" (1946).

The Kakatiya heroes fought and sacrificed their all both for national honour, integrity and also for cultural and religious freedoms of the masses. The Maoists' challenge to our cultural mores strengthened by Gandhism is now facing our people. This challenge is being engineered by Communist China through the so-called Indian Naxalites' outrages against Gandhian libraries and literature publishing houses, Mahatma Gandhi's statues and exhibitions. This challenge is becoming a greater menace to our national freedom and dharma than even the 1962 Chinese aggression.

What is wrong with Mahatma Gandhi in the eyes of Naxalites and Maoists? That he stood for non-violence? That he fought for and won our national freedom? That he strove for communal harmony? That he bled for humanism, Harijan and Girijan uplift? That he worked for women's emancipation? That he extolled self-employment economy? That he believed in religious. social, ideological toleration and co-existence of the Hindu, Muslim, Buddhistic, Jain, Christian, Sikh, Sufi paths towards the achievement of happiness of all the masses?

We need now, more than ever before, patriotic leaders like Prolaya and Kapaya, Raya brothers (Harihara, Bukka, Kampa) veteran statesmen like Veera Ballala, Annaya, powerful preachers like Vidyaranya, Tikkana, Bhaskara and self-sacrificing champions of our dharma and humanism like the Kakatiya nayaks and lenkas to protect our country from external aggressors and promote our cultural standards and speed up our people's march towards ennobling humanism and social justice, along the non-violent path of Mahatma Gandhi.

I am convinced that the Kakatiya heroes have a message, in this context, for the people of this post-Gandhian age. Our students, youths, the masses and their intellectual and cultural leaders have to make up their mind whether they would allow this Naxalite-Mao's onslaught on all our cultural values, Gandhian ideals and teachings to go unchallenged without any convinced and concerted resistance, as unfortunately had happened for so many centuries in North India before the Mughals or they would rather follow the footprints of these nayaks and

lenkas of Dakshinapath and stand up in defence of our Gandhian ideals, fundamental rights, Bharatiya dharma and culture and national integrity.

This thesis is written with the object of strengthening the will, fervour and convictions of our patriots and to evoke afresh a sense of mission and enthusiasm among our younger generation, to strive and sacrifice in the Kakatiya lenkas' fashion, for the promotion and protection of our democracy, its foundation of humanism and fundamental rights.

It so happened that those imperial masters were Muslim invaders and they invoked their faith in Islam to inspire themselves in achieving their victories in wars. But in course of time, almost all their descendants became Indians and resented the favours gained by new immigrants because, as Indians, they must enjoy priority. They were joined by tens of millions of our own Indian converts, so that today our Muslim brothern are as much Indians and as good citizens as all others.

We all desire the development of national unity, sense of social integration and economic comradeship between Hindus, Muslims and other religious or minority communities.

I have purposely avoided quoting many blood-curdling instances of cruelty displayed by so many sultans, because they were the products of a barbaric heritage from Central Asia; later on, the Mughals like Akbar, south Indian sultans like Abul Hasan Kutb Shah known as Tanisha of Golconda and Tippu Sultan of Mysore have grown to be more humane as they imbibed the Indian spirit of tolerance and humanism.

I wish to pay through this monograph the well-merited tribute to the national kisan nayak martyrs of the Kakatiya-Vijayanagar age who achieved the national independence of Dakshinapath from the imperialism of foreign rulers at Delhi and Gulbarga.

It is a great pity that, barring a few outstanding exceptions, the Andhra poets of that and succeeding centuries have lost

themselves so much in their recitations, translations and repetitive interpretations of the Sanskrit epics and composing and singing the panegaries of their contemporary feudal chiefs and rajas, as to fail to appreciate the inspiring and epochal role played by Kakatiya nayaks' revolution.

Srinatha was the one great scholar-poet who immortalised the cult of veera nayaks through his eloquent and exhilarating epic-ballad about Palnad veeras (heroes). It is unfortunate that he, the versatile connoisseur of creative thoughts and stimulating experiences with damsels of all walks of life, which took place about two centuries earlier had failed to muse and compose either songs or poems about the aims, ideals, trials, tribulations, sufferings and sacrifices of the Kakatiya-Karnatak nayaks and their lenkas during this national revolution and its achievements. If it had not been for that revolution, the later rulers of Kondavidu and Rajahmundry could not have enjoyed their power, nor could they have taken so full a share in the pleasure and prosperity of their courts.

The great devotee and poet, Potana, dared to dream of redemption for the Delhi-dominated society and embellished his passionate faith in Indian vedic culture and its ultimate triumph through his inspiring stories of Lord Krishna, Prahlada, Gajendra and Vamana, in his free rendering of epic Mahabhagavata. It is possible that he had warrior empress Rudrama Devi's great example in his mind, as he was delineating in such a romantic manner Satyabhama's performance on the battle-field in Krishna's fight against Narakasura. Alas, even he could not think of composing any lyrics, ballads, or epic or even prabhandham over the glorious achievements of Rudrama or Pratapa Rudra or Prolaya or Kapaya or Vinayak Dev. Andhra writers, poets and ballad singers had, on the whole, failed right upto this century, to appreciate and give poetic or historical expression to the message—inspiring and epochal-wrought in such an indelible and ennobling manner by the Kakatiya nayaks. The credit goes to the famous scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu, Vedam Venkataraya Shastri, who hailed appropriately enough from the same Nellore of Manumasiddhi and poet Tikkana, the proteges of Ganapati Deva, for

having visualised the full significance of that first series of wars of independence that the Indians of Dakshinapath had waged under the leadership of Pratapa Rudra and his nayaks. So, he wrote that play, at once original in its theme and classical in its dramatic technique and dimentions called 'Pratapa Rudra' epitomising his uniqueness in bravery, statesmanship and patriotism. He portrayed all the horror of the invaders felt by Pratapa Rudra, his prime minister 'Yugandhara' Annaya Mantri and Vidyaranya, the high priests of nayak age.

The success of the play as a literary piece and as a great source of inspiration to the youths of the past 50 years has specially highlighted, by contrast, the failure of the earlier ages of poets and writers to be enlivened and ennobled by that great epoch in Andhra history. Chilukuri Veerabhadra Rao, M. Somasekhara Sarma, Bh. Krishna Rao, M Rama Rao, Venkataramanayya, the historians, and poet Yetukuri Venkata Narasayya have done credit to that theme and to themselves by their writings.

By 1948, Yetukuri Venkata Narasayya, a poet of great artistry and imagination wrote a fine poem in Telugu about the disputes that arose over Rudrama's accession to the throne. My long introduction to that book embodied some of the thoughts about that Kakatiya age. Credit goes to the Andhra Historical Research Society of Rajahmundry for having published in 1940 commemorative volumes on Kakatiyas. Recently poet Arudra brought to light the literary contributions made by a number of poets of that Kakatiya era. Both Venkataramanayya and Somasekhara Sarma, had contributed valuble chapters to Yazdani's *Early History of the Deccan.* B. Rama Raju of the Osmania University has set a good example in encouraging his research students to study the social and political history of the Andhras and publishing the results of their studies.

I have largely depended in gathering material for this monograph upon the results of the researches made over decades by the distinguished historians, Sewell of *Forgotten Empire* and Somasekhara Sarma, the author of the *Forgotten Chapter*

of Andhra History I have also freely quoted from the *South Indian Inscriptions* and *Historical Inscriptions of Southern India* edited by Sewell and Krishnaswami Aiyangar; Gribble's *History of the Deccan* and Arudra's *Kakatiya Yugam.* Thurston's *Castes and Tribes*, Bhavayya's *History of Kammas* and Suravarapu Pratapa Reddi's *Andhra's Social History* also proved useful in understanding the social and political integrity of Andhra.

Many streams of social forces mingled and co-mingled in course of time but all of them were wedded to Bharatiya dharma and culture. Whenever they came under the influence of liberal or conservative priests, they gained or lost in their social outlook and status. All the time they were struggling to rise high in the eyes of the patriots through their heroic and patriotic sacrifices. The orders of lenkas and nayaks and this half a century of their organised national revolution have raised them to the noble heights and stature of puranic Kshatriyas.

Whenever priests found it expedient or profitable, certain clans or even families used to be extolled as Kshatriyas of one or the other imagined *gotra* (lineage). Actually there were no such Kshatriyas in Dakshinapath as those of Mahabharata. Certain it is that all the peoples of the South from the professionally hymn-singing Brahmins to the socially depressed Harijans, assumed Kshatriya dharma, fought bravely in many a war that took place for the protection of dharma and local nayaks or kings and in that manner, brought distinction for their clans, families or religions. For instance, who would not admire the heritage of the people who carry the family titles such as 'Veera gandham' (sandal scent of heroism), 'Surapa Neni' (Naidu of Gondi of Vijayanagar), 'Rayidi' (Vijayanagar rayas), 'Suri Reddi' (Reddi of heroism), 'Sura Varam' (Gift of heroes), 'Vasi Reddi' (famous Reddi), Kesaraneni, Veeramachaneni, Ontari and Kankanala.

II. GENESIS OF NAYAK ORDER

The history of Dakshinapath has come to be distinguished by the rise of nayaks from among the various tribes of agriculturists to oppose from time to time the onslaughts of the imperialistic rulers of Delhi, beginning with Ala-ud-Din, upon the political and cultural independence of Dakshinapath. Through their spirited and united resistance against the repeated invasions from the Muslim forces of Delhi, the nayaks rose to be a political force. Through the self-sacrificing leadership that they displayed in defending the political independence of the whole of Dakshinapath, the nayaks of Kakatiya empire justified their genealogy from the venerated heroes of Pallava (5th to 7th century), Rashtrakuta (8th to 10th century), Chalukya (6th to 12th century), Chola (9th to 13th century) and Yadava and Hoysala (12th and 13th century) regimes. While their forefathers remained content by letting their kings and emperors alone to leave their impact on the course of history through inscriptions and *jayasthambas*, during the Kakatiya era the nayaks attained a regal stature and special social status, with independent rights to hold their courts, to appoint ministers, to issue inscriptions and to claim special titles. They discovered their capacity for achieving unity and providing leadership through the frequent wars of independence that they waged against the Delhi sultans to repel, to defeat and to drive them away. They thus gained self-confidence and status of political independence.

For well over a century, India's cultural, religious, intellectual and social heritage was protected in Dakshinapath, by the Kakatiya nayaks, with the support of Pandyas, Hoysalas and others. After the fall of Devagiri and Warangal, for two more centuries the responsibility of protecting Bharatiya dharma from the Muslim invaders fell on the Vijayanagar rayas and nayaks of Kakatiya vintage and of Chola, Pandya, Chera, Hoysala, Yadav traditions. But the Talikota battle in 1565 proved fatal. Thereafter, India had to go through centuries of exposure to foreign invasions and cultural shocks before

she could recover and recapture her spiritual soul and political freedom during this 20th century.

Those Kakatiya warriors showed the way to their successors who played a leading role in rekindling the spirit of Indian independence.

The nayaks of Andhra continued to rebel from time to time, against the Gulbarga Sultans for about a century, even after the fall of their confederacy (1368-1455) consequent upon the death of Kapaya on the battle-field at the hands of the rival and rebel nayak of Recharla because, the spirit of independence and sense of loyalty to Bharatiya dharma which were inculcated for so long by Pratapa Rudra and wnich took the dimensions of popular movement would not let them remain for long subservient vassals of alien rulers. Off and on, right up to the recent battle between Nizam's (Hyderabad) Viceroy Bussy and his ally, the Raja of Vijayanagar and the rebel chief of Bobbili in 1757, there were many a battle fought in the revolts of one or the other Andhra nayaks against the suzerainty of Golconda—Hyderabad.

It was the same spirit and tradition of independence which energised and sustained the nayaks of the Vijayanagar Rayas, Madura and Tanjore regimes and their leadership of the South Indian people during the next two and a half centuries. The British had to fight many a battle, over a century, even after gaining overall political hegemony over India, in overcoming the ever-recurring revolts of one or the other of the numerous nayaks or palegars whose domains studded the countryside in Andhra, Mysore, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu; so strong and lasting had been the Kakatiya nayaks' tradition and spirit of freedom and national independence.[1] True to that tradition so many thousands of kisans claiming to be their scions and being proud of their heritage of "Swords of Heroes" coming down to us, as their clan heirlooms and loyal to their vows taken during family functions of *veera puja*, offered satyagraha against the British empire and made their contributions to the attainment of India's freedom.

1. C.S. Srinivasachari, "Nayaks of Tanjore".

The nayaks of Tamil Nadu, like Katta Bomman, nayaks of Karnatak like Rani Chennama, who were the descendants of the nayaks of Vijayanagar and Prolaya-Kapaya vintage did rise against the British imperialism of the 18th and 19th centuries, as much in the name of dharma as in that of patriotism.

It was again that memorable heritage which inspired Maharaja Pravin Chandra Bhanj Deo of Bastar (Madhya Pradesh), the Kakatiya descendant of Maharaja Ammaya Deva, brother of Pratapa Rudra, to rebel against the tyranny of Congress Government in 1966 after India attained independence; he preferred a martyr's death to submission to the dictatorship of the Congress Government.

In Chola and Chalukya times (8th to 13th centuries) the Andhra, Karnatak and Tamil regions seem to have been controlled by the Chola or Chalukya kings or their viceroys through a number of mahamandaleswaras and mandaleswaras, that is, zonal chiefs and district chiefs. Those chiefs enjoyed fuedal powers, including control over law and order, land revenue and commerce and communications. They maintained their armies with the tax revenues collected from peasants and artisans and merchants on condition of having to place their forces at the disposal of the zonal chiefs, viceroys and the kings, whenever called upon to do so. The villages were similarly controlled by the Reddis, Naidus or Gowds (Patels) and Karnams (Patwaris). There must have been many other chiefs for groups of villages acting as intermediary military authorities. The mahamandaleswaras and mandaleswaras and others associated with them were known as Nayudus or Nayanimgaru or Nayaks. It was from these nayaks that mandaleswaras sprang into power and some of those mandaleswaras rose to be mahamandaleswaras. It was from among them again the king used to choose his ministers and commanders-in-chief. The most powerful and favoured of them were honoured with the title and insignia of *Gandapenderam*, a golden anklet or armlet which corresponds to the Garter conferred by the British king by personally donning it on the recipient.

The Cholas of Tamil Nadu had their capital in Kanchi. Their greatest ruler Rajaraja (985–1011) conquered the whole of coastal Andhra, Kalinga, Orissa and parts of Bengal. Since those dominions were too far from Tamil Nadu, the seat of empire, his successors appointed a number of viceroys over different dominions; certainly one for Velanadu with Dhanakataka Nagaram (now known as Tsandole) as capital [Rajendra Kulothunga I, (1070)], another for northern Andhra, Kalinga and Orissa with Rajamahendravaram as capital.

For over a century previous to the Chola regimes, the Chalukyas of Maharashtra and Karnatak gained ascendency over Andhra, thanks to the conquests of Pulakesin. But their Andhra viceroys were later overcome by Cholas and both Houses were merged into one through marriage alliances. For over 40 years, Kulothunga Chola became their common ruler, being the grandson of both the aged rulers of Chola and Chalukya kings.

The alchemy of social transformations, mutations and mergers took place as between the scions and princely supporters of the decadent ruling Houses (Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Cholas, Pallavas) and the ascending allies and ambitious nayaks of the proved prowess and powers. It helped the reorganisation, re-establishment or protection of the name-sake rajas and their families and dominions, through the marriage alliances, so much coveted by the nayaks. To gain regal status and rights and thus deserve in the eyes of public their growing powers and princely titles nayaks achieved marriage alliances with the princely families of Cholas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and such other dynasties. Thus, quite a large number of Karma or Kamma nayaks (of Kamma Rashtra)[2] raised themselves into mandaleswara and mahamandaleswara statures not

2. Chandaluru (now in Ongole district) copper inscription of Kumara Vishnu II (673 AD) of Pallavas mentions 'Karmakara Rashtramu', or 'Kamma Rashtramu'. An Amravati inscription (before 400 BC) mentions two sects of priests, 'Maharava Kammalu' and 'Nava Kammalu'. According to a study done by Ch. Purnachandra Rao, the Kakatiyas arose from the kisan tribe of Kammas (Malkapuram village–a monograph, Census of India, 1961, Vol. II, Andhra Pradesh).

only through their military achievements but also through their marriage alliances with the Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas and Cholas.

In the same way, every new conquering royal House tried to establish its right over the people by marrying their princesses (Devis and Mahadevis) to the outstanding nayaks in their new territories who were willing to accept their suzerainty and offer support to their regimes.

It was in this manner that Gonka I, a Telugu Kamma nayak rose to be viceroy because of his attainment of regal status through his royal mother, the Chola princess Akkama Mahadevi. Panda Nayak, who had a minister of his own, thus became the uncle of Gonka Raja II (1077) of Velanadu (coastal area from Godavari to Penna rivers). Gonka II married in his turn Subbamamba of Telugu nayak's family. Gonka's mother was Sivambika and their daughter was Prolambika, both being daughters of Telugu nayaks who gained regal status through their marriages into the ruling family. This Gonka II was at first a mandaleswara. Then he rose to be viceroy of the Chola ruler of Kanchi and eventually emerged as an independent ruler, on the fall of Kanchi empire.

The son of Kulothunga Gonka II was a mahamondaleswara. He was proud to say that Subbamamba of Kammanadu was his mother. Though by that time, the Kanchi Cholas lost control over the Telugu regions, their successors in power who were also their relatives by marriages, took pride in assuming their names as well as titles, the better to recommend themselves to the gradations of military chieftains (nayaks) who were also excercising feudal ruling powers

It was probably his grandson Kulothunga Chola of the Velanadu ruling family who declared his ancestry to the 'Durjaya'[3] family instead of claiming his lineage from the declining

3. (i) This Durjaya was indeed a historical person. He was the ruler in Kalinga embracing Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and Ganjam districts whom Vishnu Kundin Maharaja Madhava Varma III (546-611) claimed to have defeated

Chola family. Gradually, the Cholas of Tamil Nadu failed to prevent the emergence of their viceroys into independent rajas of Velandu, Rajahmundry, etc. Their feudatories, the Kammas and their associate nayaks gained confidence of the people by fighting valiantly on both sides of the princes who

3. (contd.) as per his Ipuru inscription (in 583)—("Mana Samskriti and Charitra" cp.137).

(ii) Velanati Chodas, their relatives and allies, the Kammas, Reddis, Velamas, Telagas claimed to be 'Durjayas' among Andhra kisan masses (M S. Sarma's "Forgotten Chapter of Andhra History" p. 55). Ganapati Deva gave his sister Melambika, his daughter Ganapamba, in marriage to Natavati Buddha and Kota Beta respectively, who claimed to be of the Durjaya clan So also Prolaya and Kapaya hailed 'Durjaya' as of their own clan. Ganapati Deva avowed in his inscription of Gavarapadu that his Kakati family obtained its glory from their famous ancestor Durjaya ("Our Culture—Samskriti", p. 219).

(iii) The Kakatiyas and Velanati Chodas, their scions Prolaya and Kapaya and all their relatives claimed to have belonged to the clan named after their Durjaya of Kalinga, just as so many lenkas claimed so proudly to be the sons and grandsons of their beloved leader Pratapa Rudra Deva. It exemplifies how tenacious was the passion of people for power, how keen they were to nurse and cherish their ambition to regain their lost prominence, however painful might be their later fallen status during times of adversity. They continued to use their allegiance to their past leader and glory attached to his exploits as the ladder to gain their step-ups through heroic deeds. Thus, this Durjaya clan of kisans which started its political career in Kalinga and which found its political bases in the west under Chalukya umbrella and in the east under that of Cholas. achieved its supremacy over the whole of Andhra in the Kakatiya time and finally provided meritorious leadership through Prolaya, Kapaya, Vinayak Dev to that glorious nayaks' revolution against Delhi imperialism. It was indeed a fitting patriotic finale for their adventure in political life.

(iv) The descendants of the defeated Kalinga King Durjaya had to play the humble for a long time in order to escape from the campaigns of vengeance of the victorious rulers. So they managed to function as belonging to 'Vodde Vamsa' or people of the Kalinga; that is until

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fought for supremacy over each other in the famous Palnad battle of the 11th century. The Cholas of Velanadu, Palnad, Kolanu sacrificed their heroic youths and veteran generals in that fratricidal war of Palnad. The Kamma, Reddi, Velama and even panchama nayaks emerged triumphant, while the hitherto powerful Chodas and Chalukyas lost their ascendency and were content to merge themselves in the new feudal order of power and social status. Balachandra, the heroic son of the victorious Velama Brahma Nayudu married Manchala of Dandu House of Kammas. Warrior-minister Nagamba was herself a Kamma and the widow of a Reddi chieftain[4]. There

3. (contd.) they gained once again some secure footing in the feudal order of power. Kakatiyas used to claim that they originally descended from Samanta Vodde family Actually their earlier founder Gundayana married the daughter of chief of Hanumakonda and gave his famous warrior-sister Kamasani in marriage to the Viriyala prince Yerrana. These facts strengthen our assumption that these Kakatiyas originally descended from the family of Kalinga warrior Durjaya Dev of the 6th century. By the time Kakatiya or Kakatiya Gundayana and his successor widow Kuntala Devi came to establish themselves as mandaleswaras and gained the powerful support of their relatives-Viriyala nayaks, who had by then become so well established as to publicly trace their ancestry from the ancient Durjaya king, these Kakatiya nayaks Gundayana and his successors also made bold to acclaim their Durjaya ancestry. (K. Sarvappa "Siddheswara Charitram" p. XXV-vii).

When the Chalukya, Chola imperial masters became weakened, through their internecine rivalries and wars they gained the opportunity to carve out their own mandalams and gained recognition from the one or the other rival imperial masters as mandaleswaras. They made bold to declare themselves as belonging to Durjaya clan, just like their powerful relatives, the Viriyala princes. ("Pratapa Rudra Deva Charitram," introduction, p. 25).

4 "Bharati", March 1970.

A large number of Velanadu Cholas or Chodas must have had marriage-alliances with the local warrior-kisan families. All of them together might have come to be known as Velamas, after

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were such inter-marriages between Kammas, Velamas, Reddis and thus they strengthened their hegemony over Kammanadu.

Beta I (1000–50), the Kakatiya nayak was emerging from the status of *samanta vishti vamsa* the feudatory family from among the toilers, Karma or Kamma (Buddistic term) peasants into a feudatory prince within the Chalukya empire. His son, Prola I rose to be a mahamandaleswara of Chalukya Someswara and was granted Hanumakonda as a reward for his contributions to the triumphs of Chalukya armies. His son, Beta II and grandson, Prola II, assumed princely status under the Chalukyas. Eventually Prola II declared himself as an independent king.

His great grandson, Rudra I (1158 95), came to the throne by 1158 and extended his dominion right up to Kurnool after defeating the Velanati Chodas. He claimed to have helped the defeated Choda nayaks so rehabilitate themselves as nayaks within his kingdom (1162–65). He was then in a position to claim to be the rightful successor in princely genealogy of the famous Karikala Chola; as much because of his military triumphs as by the continuous social process of inter-marriages batween Kamma nayak families and Chola, Chalukya princely families. If we keep in mind how Kulothunga Deva from Velanadu and Vikramaditya of Chalukyas came to lay rival claims on the Chola throne of Kanchi, because they happened to be the grandsons of Rajendra Chola; we can understand how the Kakatiya princes who had intermarried with Cholas as well as Chalukyas felt justified in claiming Karikala Chola as their ancestor also. When they

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the disappearance of the supremacy of Cholas of Kanchi and the emergence of local nayaks into more or less independent rulers. To this day, a Kamma clan is called Velmati, another Velaga or Velugu, while a large number of peasant families are classed as Velamas of different clans and social gradations. Recherla nayaks of Velama or Velamati or Velanadu ancestry, who played such a notable role in the building up of Kakatiyas from the earliest times and who were so closely associated with Kakatiya rulers from the time of Rudra, are within the social cadre of Velamas. Some of the Vellalas might have also come into Andhra in the wake of Chola invasions.

defeated successively Chalukyas and Cholas and assumed independent regal powers over portions of their respective dominions, they must have felt justified in declaring publicly and triumphantly their long-cherished attachment to their ancient hero, Durjaya, the Rana of Kalinga and in claiming their right of succession to the regal privileges of Velanati Chodas who were also the Durjaya clan, within the broad tribe of Kammas, the traditional peasant-warrior class.

According to a Warangal inscription, in the reign of King Mahadeva (1195-99), successor of Rudra I and father of Ganapati Deva (1199-1261) "the king learned dharma from his preceptor, Duruvesvara."

It is interesting to note that quite a number of these mahamandaleswaras and some of the mandaleswaras who had achieved distinction by their victories over royal alliances assumed the status of Deva and title of Raja and Maharaja. So slender was the control exercised by the so-called emperor over the kings and by the kings over the mahamandaleswaras that the titles of Deva and Maharaja and such other royal insignia were being assumed by all feudatories as well as the kings, without upsetting their relative hierarchical relationship.

III. HERITAGE OF KAKATIYA SOCIETY

Political and Social Environment

The concept that the ruler of any region is the proto-type of Lord Vishnu, the supreme ruler (which is akin to the European concept of the divine right of kings) came to be fully exploited wherever and whenever Hindu princes ascended *gaddis*. Brahmins, who held sway over the mind of Hindu masses, used their power to confer upon the princes the status of Kshatriya lineage when their need arose to protect the people.

Even the Muslims exalted the king in the same manner and to the same extent. "The king was the supreme power in the state. He was the ruler, judge, military leader, sometimes even the preacher and leader of public worship. The king was the shadow of God on earth" (Mujahid Shah, 1375–78, claimed this distinction).[1]

The king used to choose his ministers from among all his subjects, irrespective of class or caste. These ministers invariably happened to be nayaks in their own right. They had to be personally loyal to the king though they exercised the princely rights and powers (civil, military and social) in their own respective mandalams.

These princely prerogatives, amounting almost to autocratic uncontrolled powers, were claimed and often times exercised by all the feudal chiefs of those centuries, subject only to the time-honoured autonomy of the villages and the charters and privileges of the various guilds of merchants, artisans and other votaries of *Vishwakarma*. The smallest of this order of chiefs had to pay his annual tribute to the one above him. All those who had to function under the authority and protection of the chief of the local fort had to pay their homage to him.

There were so many special privileges, allowed to or conferred upon those who were admitted into the prized and

1. Yazdani, "Early History of the Deccan".

favoured circle of *raja bandhus* and princely or nayak order of those days. Such nayaks were allowed to keep a *gaddi*, hoist an umbrella, wear the *dhoti* in a special manner, display horse-hair fans, get their presence announced by the blowing of sanctified conches, beating of drums and move in palanquins and ride on specially decorated horses or even elephants. These distinctions were conferred upon such great poets like Tikkana and ministers like Annaya.[2]

The chief of a number of such forts in any mandalam were obliged to accept the leadership of mandaleswaras and so on. This order of seniority rose up to the king who presided over a number of mandalams. When a king was over-powerful, young, vigorous and enjoyed personal loyalty of a good number of mandaleswaras and mahamandaleswaras, as had happened during the early decades of Ganapati Deva, Rudrama and Pratapa Rudra, the chiefs used to be obedient and their armies joined the king's own army and functioned in a comradely manner.

There was also an ever-present threat to every mahamandaleswara from the neighbouring mandaleswaras who passionately desired to rise to the higher status. Similarly, mahamandaleswaras were jealous of one another and were uncertain of their neighbours' intentions to steal a march over them by defeating one or more of them and assuming all the titles of the defeated rajas. There was thus always a state of armed truce and uncertain peace. People lived with war as their next day's possible activity of life.

Whenever the kings became weak or old or lost their prestige because of heavy defeats in wars, as had happened during the old age of Ganapati Deva, in the early period of Rudrama's rule and after Delhi Sultan succeeded in extracting tributes from Pratapa Rudra, many a chief either rebelled and flaunted his independence or his loyalty became nominal.

Many of the agricultural castes of the present day can legitimately trace their earlier military and social origins to the

2. We learn much about these social matters from the writings of the famous Poet Ketana, who was honoured by Tikkana.

families closely identified with the Cholas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Yadavas, Kakatiyas and Rayas, that is, the clans and castes that ruled in South India from the 10th to the 17th centuries.

As and when purohits chose to ennoble or raise one or the other of the ruling families, irrespective of its earlier origin and status in the South Indian pantheon of clans, castes or tribes, to the legitimacy of princedom 'deserving the rights and status of rulers' as popularised by the newly developed *puranic kalakshepams*, the military leaders of some clan or caste began to claim to be the Kshatriyas, don the *gotra* of some fancied puranic hero and assume the titles of the locally popular hero of mythological heritage. Thus, some Rashtrakuta, Chalukya, Chola, Kakatiya nayaks and princes laid claim to the privileges and status of Kshatriyas and some Brahmins of Tikkana Somayaji's status or Vidyaranya's saintliness formally consecrated them as such. They thus came to be annointed as the historically legitimate heirs of Shri Rama or Shri Krishna or Pandavas and the religious-minded loyal masses were enjoined to offer them the obedience and affection that were due to the descendants of the epic heroes.[3]

Once the king assumed the divine role, the princes (nayaks) and regional leaders—the Reddis, Kapus; Karnams, Ayyagars etc. held themselves as his lenkas or symbolic sons and offered their services and obeisance in the same way as princes royal (*raja bandhus*) were bound to. In this manner, the mahamantris, mantris, nayaks, senapatis, Reddis, Kapus were raised far above the ranks of the soldiers and the masses had considered themselves as belonging to the ruling class. The moment that anyone of the masses, not excluding Harijans, backward classes, was raised to any of the coveted places in the military hierarchy of the princes, all the members of his clan or caste also felt themselves uplifted and as many of their

3. Though the king or the prince or the nayak, as the case may be, was said to be "a source of all power, 'his power' was subject, as in all other Hindu states, to the limitations imposed by Hindu dharma and ancient custom of the land which he was not allowed to override" (see Yazdani, op. cit., p. 671)

dynamic youths and elders as could set their feet upon the ladder of social promotion began to lay claim to and assume as many privileges of the ruling class as possible Thus, the basic agricultural masses who had been known as the *karmakars* or *kashtakars* or *kammas* during the Buddhistic period, raised themselves from out of the social commonalty to which they were condemned by the ascendant Hindu priests on the downfall of Buddhist monks and began again to reclaim some of their lost social prominence through the good offices of Brahmin priests. To this day, this obsequious attempt to gain a high enough social status is finding favour with many clans or castes, which have till now been suffering from a sense of suppression in the puranic-minded social order.

There was also another centuries-long process of the scions of former ruling clans or castes, salvaging themselves from utter ruin and politico-social boycott by the newly emergent ruling classes by inter-marrying with the ruling families or the clans or castes which were assuming more and more powers and places of honour among the new rulers. Thus, many a family which once belonged to Pallava, Rashtrakuta, Yadava, Chalukya, Velanati (or Velanadu or Velama) Chola, Choda, Raya, Dev, came to merge with the later ruling classes and transformed themselves as Palles, Pallekars, Rattas, Reddis, Chaluvas or Saluvas, Velamas, Chodas, Rayas. Rayidis, Devaras and Devatas

Not being satisfied with these ladders for social promotion, many nayaks, Reddis, Niyogis, lenkas sought the ministrations of sanctity by inscribing their dedication of tanks, temples, new villages to their local princes (rajas) or contemporaneous kings (rajadhirajas) or so-called emperors (tribhuvana chakravarthis) and thus assure themselves of everhigher social status and declare their own assumption of a higher or nobler or more honourable attachment to the locally popular ruling family. It was to this tradition and royal order that the 74 nayaks and all their followers right up to the Reddis, Naidus, Senapatis, Sreshtis of Pratapa Rudra Deva belonged. It was because of this 'sense of belonging' to the Kakatiya princedom and Bharatiya dharma of Kshatriyas that

the Kakatiya Confederation of 74 nayaks and their phalanxes, stretching their military arms and spreading their social roots to every village in that pre-eminently *gram sabha* society was able to evoke the support of the broad Kamma masses of that agricultural society.

Order of Lenkas

Every chief, whether he was a king or nayak, used to maintain a number of body guards who were specially attached to him. Each one of them took the oath to shed his blood and even sacrifice his life in the interests and protection of the person and family of the chief. Those people were then known as Lenkas. Pratapa Rudra raised this Order into one of the most important and powerful sections of his defence forces and conferred special distinctions upon its members. The king depended upon them during crises for protecting himself and his family.

Pratapa Rudra encouraged the tribal people *(konda doras)* and Harijans also to join the Order of Lenkas. He raised a number of them to be nayaks. That is why, to this day, Senapatis, Sreshtis, Doras, are found among almost all the cadres of the society, although, during the past three centuries, they have become backward and economically under-privileged.

Lenkas "who called themselves his sons and who shared his board, fought by his side, considered themselves as good as *dasas* and entered into a covenant with their lord to devote themselves exclusively to his service. They took an oath to look on their lord as their *guru*, deity in this world and the next, to have no regard either for their property or for their lives in furtherance of his interest, to stand by him in the hour of danger, to fight his battles, either to perish with him in the clash of arms or to kill themselves if they should chance to survive him"[4]

Therefore, the Order of Lenkas was specially developed by Pratapa Rudra as a source of reliable strength. This must

4. Yazdani, op. cit, p. 670.

have been resented by some powerful mahamandaleswaras as a warning and threat to their secret ambitions. Though it did not go to his rescue at the moment of his sudden capture, the Order of Lenkas proved to be one of the main sources of strength for the later Andhra struggles organised by the nayaks under the leadership of Prolaya.

In the Kakatiya times, the Kammas, including the Reddis, Kapus, Naidus, who led the society at village level, the nayaks who gained a place in the much-coveted feudal military order, were assured of their socio-religious place of seniority in that society, next only to that of Brahmins.

Next came the leaders of artisans–rural as well as urban known as Sreshtis or Chettis and the merchant–cum–agriculturists, including traders and they were given places of honour in the social hierarchy by virtue of their own special battalions.

There was keen competition for employment in the regular fighting forces, since the soldiers were permitted to retain part of the sports of war and booty acquired.

Since the military service was not subjected to any communal restrictions, it was possible for anyone who wished to adopt the profession of arms to enlist himself as a soldier, irrespective of caste or creed to which he might belong.

The service in the army was the surest ladder for quickest and most respected social promotion, available in those days for patriots and social dare-devils. Every ambitious youth was free to display his heroic exploits in the defence forces and especially on the war-front. That ladder was available to people of all castes though the upper castes (*raja bandhus*, lenkas) had better chances of providing themselves with the necessary military equipment such as horses, coat of arms and followers. Once a young man was able to cover himself with glory, his whole clan, besides his family used to get a step up in the gradational social respectability of those times. Feudal lords and kings used to extol them by conferring titles and even orthodox priests used to recognise such distinctions and

raise their people into the sanctified cadre of Kshatriyas possibly on making the usual offerings. Hence the rush of all adventurous youths to join the fighting forces and their constant efforts to achieve membership of Lenka Order, thence nayankaram and finally samanta status.

Religious intolerance and inter-religious struggles and persecutions and intrigues, leading to murders of opponents, even on a large-scale were not unknown to the Indian political and religious life of those ages, even down to the times of Rani Rudrama Devi. The Yadava kings of Devagiri and Kakatiyas exploited the religious passions and controversies that raged among the Jains, Buddhists and Saivites to lend additional fervour and justification for their wars against each other.

To strengthen that religious movement, Ganapati Deva invited and welcomed Tikkana, the prime minister of Choda King Manumasiddhi of Nellore with royal favours as were customary. Tikkana was received ouside the city of Warangal by the king himself. He was seated on a *gaddi* by the side of the king's own, offered cool drinks, scented with the best of *attars*, annointed with sandal paste, dressed with the most beautiful and rich clothes and was worshipped, as befitting a great saint and preceptor.

Tikkana was then requested to engage himself in prolonged debates with the Buddhist and Jain acharyas He defeated them in those dialectical discussions and demonstrated the philosophical superiority and religious excellence of Hinduism, as represented by Saivite philosophy and practices and achievements of its saints over the rival philosophies and practices of Buddhists and Jains. He provided thus the spiritual dynamism and political justification for the subsequent persecution of Buddhists and Jains and stoppage of all favours, hitherto enjoyed by their acharyas and priests.

The Yadavas of Devagiri invaded again Kakatiya dominions in the wake of Rudrama Devi's assumption of full ruling powers after her father's death and tried to rouse public support for their aggression by offering to take revenge upon

Kakatiya's persecution of Buddhists and Jains, and that war-cry evoked the open as well as secret support from those people and priests who were still in sympathy with the much-persecuted Buddhists and Jains. This gave Rudrama Devi further justification for continuing her father's campaign against the adherents and priests of those faiths.

The biggest disruptive forces that weakened this feudatory Hindu polity of South India were the religious rivalries as between Jainism and Veera Saivism and Veera Saivism and Veera Vaishnavism. The heroes of Palnad battle took their respective religious war-banners of Saivism and Vaishnavism.

The Kakatiyas of Warangal, Yadavas of Devagiri came to be ranged against each other, when Ganapati Deva gave up Jainism and embraced Saivism and their respective religious heads added further fires to the political rivalries and furies that had been smouldering and were at times bursting into political conflagrations.

Despite such a divisive tendency, the religious fervour of the people of Hindu age also proved to be the single strongest and most enduring integrating force. While all the nayaks were often at war with each other, the loyalty of the masses and princes to the Bharatiya dharma proved to be the most effective centripetal force.

Role of village Commonwealths*

The villagers–peasants, artisans and traders–did not evince much political interest in those ever-recurrent quarrels and rivalries between the nayaks and kings since the taxes they had to pay and the homage they had to offer were governed by the traditional dharma. So, they did not mind very much as to who came to claim to be the mahamandaleswara or king from time to time.

*History of India (Hindu India) Part I, pp 239-242, by C S. Srinivasachari.

Village people had their inviolable armour of the village commonwealth and ascending groupings of these commonwealths, almost right up to the mandalams or districts. Each village with its hamlets had its own panchayat. In most cases its members were elected by the drawing of lots. The contending candidates earlier got nominated by the adult males of their respective castes. The meetings of the panchayatdars were presided over, possibly by the eldest of them.

The panchayat was responsible for collection of the land tax to be paid to the mandaleswaras. It also levied and collected certain local taxes or cesses to cover its expenses on its minimum possible social and religious functions.

The king gave grants to the nayaks to fell forests, to found new villages, to dig tanks, to build embankments and to develop irrigation.

Fallow land was free from tax for a few years after being ploughed; thereafter land rent was fixed at the rate of the local coin, *chinnam*, per an area of sowable ploughed field. After the village site was selected, ayacut was fixed, 12 village officers were appointed and then the cultivable fields were plotted and alloted to the willing settlers.

The village panchayat was the owner of all unoccupied land, forests and village commons and it regulated their use. It was the guardian of all peasants' rights over their holdings, gardens, houses and other properties. Most of the beneficial and ameliorative functions of government were discharged by the village panchayats. Local mandaleswaras were encouraged by their aged parents, Brahmins and kings to dig canals, construct tanks, maintain free feeding houses for priests, etc.

The village panchayat was the registering authority for the sale, mortgage, transfer and such other economic transactions such as the invitation to and settling of artisans. It used to regulate the terms of payment as between the peasants, workers and artisans, for their mutual exchange of services. It kept record of the peasants' holdings, their transfers either by

sale or inheritance, tax-payments in kind or cash, etc. It used to settle the disputes that arose from time to time in regard to such affairs. There might be appeals over the panchayat's decisions concerning such disputes to the mandaleswaras but the latter was guided by the priests at the panchayat and mandalam level and their decisions were always based on principles of justice and fairplay.

The panchayats were the custodians of the communal and temple properties. The king or the mandaleswaras had control only over their forts and not on the villages. The panchayat had to agree to any purchase that the rulers wished to make of the local lands owned by peasants or even a portion of the communal lands, and the purchase price was paid by the rulers to the sellers through the panchayat. Under such a system of village autonomy and self-governance, the people had no compelling need to worry themselves about who their mandaleswara was, so long as they conformed to the injunctions of the traditional Hindu shastras as to the relative functions, duties and rights of the shrenis and panchayats.[5]

Whenver there were local wars as between the mandaleswaras, etc. the armies were not allowed to enter the village, except with the permission of the panchayats nor were the panchayats usually keen to take sides. Generally they were not forced into such conflicts. Individuals, even castes as a whole or their clans were free to join the forces of this or the other mandaleswara. But the panchayats saw to it that the kings and their nayaks paid some compensation to the local people for the damages caused to their crops, lands and other properties.

On the whole, the local wars were fought generally without involving the villages and with the least interference with their socio-economic life except when the panchayats chose to identify themselves with the fortunes of the local mandaleswara and his rivalries.

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5. Nilkanta Shastri, "Cōlas," Second Edition, Chapters 18 and 21. Rajendra Cōla caused a detailed survey to be made of peasants' lands and their rights over them.

But this situation changed radically when the Muslim imperialists of Delhi began their invasions and depredations. The panchayats could no longer be indifferent since the invaders showed no respect to the rights of village commonwealths or to the traditional controls over the rulers. So, the panchayats placed their able-bodied warriors as well as their accumulated food stores and temple funds at the disposal of the Kakatiya nayaks in order to strengthen the defence of the country against the invaders.

IV. KAKATĪYA EMPERORS

Ganapati and Rudrama

The principal preoccupation of a king or even an emperor of the power and eminence of Ganapati Deva used to be the maintenance of peace between the ever-jealous, turbulent and ambitious mandaleswaras and mahamandaleswaras who were always keen to wage wars against each other on the slightest pretext only to satisfy their thirst for power and glory. Ganapati Deva was thus obliged to put down with a heavy hand, the proud Yadava chiefs and make peace between them and their legitimate ruler of Nellore.

Ganapati Deva (1213—1258), the first Kakatiya king who wanted to rise to the status of an emperor, indulged in campaigns of conquest in keeping with the suicidal tradition of kings of those ages, by marching upon Kanchi, defeating the Chola emperor and thus establishing himself as a great conqueror. In that process, he impoverished the kingdom, sacrificed many a brave nayak and weakened the armed forces of the kingdom.

Having thus become the effective emperor or overlord of Dakshinapath, he gained control over the national and international trade. He encouraged international trade and commerce by generously removing many of the duties, tolls, etc. on imports and exports. He clearly enumerated the rates of taxes on articles of merchandise. He exempted from duty cargoes lost in ship-wrecks.[1]

Like so many of his contemporary emperors in the West and North-west (there were always more than two emperors in different parts of India) almost at unspoken war and

1. When Warangal fell to the Muslim invaders of Delhi, the local chief of Addanki, Anapota Reddi (1324-30) confirmed these concessions. This suggests that such local chiefs assumed independence on the fall of the empire.

maintaining all the restrictions of cold war. Ganapati Deva remained indifferent to what was happening for many decades at Delhi and the vast north Indian kingdoms. Prithvi Raj of Chauhan lost Delhi and Kutb-ud-Din of Aibak became Sultan of Delhi in 1206. He was the contemporary of three Chola emperors of Kanchi, Kulothunga III (1170–1216), Raja Raja III (1216—1246) and Rajendra Chola III (1246—1279).

Ganapati Deva was a far sighted emperor. He took in marriage the two sisters of his famous general Jayapa Senapati and developed close association with his Ayya chiefs of Divi island and thus strengthened himself in the erstwhile Venginadu of Chandole and Chebrole. He gave his own daughter Ganapamba to Beta Raja, son of Rudra and grandson of Keta Nayaka of Amravathi of Kammanadu and ensured support from the Kamma chiefs on either side of the Krishna in the uplands. His sister Malambika Mahadevi was also married to Vakkadi Malla Rudra, Maharaja of Natavadi (West Godavari and Krishna uplands), son of Natavadi Buddha (indicating the strength of Buddhist loyalties of these nayaks) Rudra Deva's daughter, Bayyamamba was married into Keta (Kota?) family of Amaravati. He conferred *Gandapenderam*, the highest honour of those times, upon Gangaya Sahini, the mahamandaleswara ruling over Rayalaseema.

He patronised Tikkana, the famous minister of Nellore king, mandaleswara Manumasiddhi. Tikkana was also a great warrior, philosopher and poet. His translation into Telugu, the second portion of the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata enriched Telugu literature, besides strengthening Hinduism. Ganapati Deva rendered royal honours to Tikkana while receiving him at Warangal and thus he gained the confidence of Brahmins and priests. Ganapati Deva invited into his intimate ministerial councils many of the mahamandaleswaras like Recherla nayak, Soma, Jayapa, Gangaya, Induluri Gannayya, son of Ganapayya, Tripurari, Pomkala Mallaya and thus strengthened the unity of his kingdom. He achieved outstanding success in his statecraft thanks to the high standards of political morality popularised by the example and cult of Mahabharata's Krishna and Dharmaja. His example of

patronising poets and scholars and championing their mission of spreading Hindu dharma was followed with increasing interest by many of his feudatory chiefs and also by his daughter Rudrama and her grandson Pratapa Rudra II, who became a renowned scholar in his own right.

It is noteworthy that while some of his mandaleswaras were engaging Brahmins as ministers, Ganapati Deva was particular in strengthening himself with the kisan warriors as ministers and prime ministers. Could it have been so because he wanted to make the mahamandaleswaras enjoy a sense of partnership in and belonging to the glamour and armour of his kingdom in addition to the Brahmin ministers like the wise Tikkana, poet Marana, warrior Tikkana?

Gangaya Sahini

During that troubled and socially revolutionary epoch, many a nayak successfully, tried to carve out for themselves small kingdoms by subduing a number of weak nayaks in adjacent nayankarams to achieve semi-regal status and recognition by the overal king, subject to the payment of a nominal tribute. It was thus that Gangaya Sahini[2] of Kayastha clan living in Kakatiyapuram in Cuddapah district, came to achieve his great triumphs, the *Gandapendera* and the prime ministership of the Kakatiya empire and became the trusted mahamandaleswara of the vast dominions covering Nalgonda up to Kaivara in Kolar district and Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur, Nellore and Guntur.

His wife was the noble Kavataayee of Kakatiya House. His grandfather, the first historical prominent Gangaya was the feudatory of the first Prolaya, the founder of Kakatiya

2. It is possible that this ruling feudal family belonged to the dynasty of Gangas of Kalinga; whose records are dated in an era (815-977), called the years of the Gangeya family. (P. 189 of C.S, Srinivasachari's History of India (Hindu Period), It is possible that it was because of this earlier ancestry, he clamed to be of Kayasthas of Kalinga Gangas.

regime and a supporter of Rudra I. No wonder, this Gangaya Sahini of such a loyal family became so dear to Rudra's great successor Ganapati Deva and his daughter Rudrama Devi. His successors TripurariMahadeva and Ambadeva Maharaja proved to be strong pillars and protectors of Pratapa Rudra II.[3]

Gangaya approved of the fond ambition of Ganapati Deva to instal in 1257 his warrior-daughter princess Rudrama as his heir-apparent. He became the dearest counseller to the emperor and trusted elder statesman to the princess. Did all the mahamandaleswaras approve of this choice? It was not unnatural for many to resent it, although the Andhra nayaks had once before accepted a woman nayak, Nagamma as the prime minister-cum-commander of Raja Nalagama of Palnad around 1184. His support became so valuable that he was honoured with the title *Gandapendera*.

It was with the wholehearted support of Gangaya Sahini, Jayapa Nayaka, Recherla nayak of Bhuvanagiri that Rudrama Devi (1258–91) succeeded to the throne of Ganapati Deva (1213–58). Rudrama Devi was, however, not acceptable to a number of mahamandaleswaras, including her own husband Veera Bhadreswara, a Chalukya king from Kolanu mahamandalam. Siddaya Deva Choda, son of mahamandaleswara Perumali Deva Choda and Dawala Devi were opposed to her. So they rebelled. They were aided by the king of Devagiri, who was awaiting such an opportunity to humble the Kakatiyas and bring them back into the fold of Jainism and Yadava empire.

Rudrama was defeated and was taken as prisoner for some time and released because Gangaya Sahini and Jayapa Nayaka (1235–58) achieved military successes. Thereafter, Rudrama put down the revolt of some of her nayaks and maintained the supremacy and unity of the kingdom. Rudrama Devi concentrated all her resources, military and political, upon developing the economy of her dominions and prosperity of her

3. The Kamma clans, Gangineni, Tripuraneni have ever since been trying to perpetuate the names of those heroic generals who distinguished themselves by their prowess, patriotism and statesmanship.

people. She was more fortunate than the Muslim queen Raziya of Delhi (1236-40) and ruled for decades with great distinction.

She had the support of the great veteran mahamandaleswara of her father's regime, the affectionate loyalty of her uncle and aunt of Amaravathi and the sound counsels of Gangaya Sahini, Jannigadeva, Tripurari, Ambadeva, Prasaditya of Recherla, Ganapaddeva Maharaja, Nissanka (Present day Nissanka amoung Telagas), Malla, Mallikarjuna Nayaka, Rajadhiraja Deva of Kolanu and poet-philosopher Tikkana and his son Marana. She worked hard for the prosperity of her people, with the able support of Ganapamba, the Rani of Amaravathi, a Kakatiya princess When Marco Polo reached South India (1288) and passed through the ports of Ramnad and Tanjore districts and visited Motupalli, the Kakatiya port, in 1293, he heard of the name and fame of Rudrama and Ganapamba of Amaravati and the prosperity of the people, prolonged peace and stability in the vast kingdom and wrote in ecstatic terms about Rudrama's outstanding success as a wise ruler.

Rudrama had no sons. She had only four daughters. She gave them in marriage to four mahamandaleswaras, one of them being the ruler of Amaravati. She adopted Pratap Rudra II, her grandson by her daughter Mummadamba (succeeded by Mummaneni Nayaks and Mummidivaram was given as Agraharam in her memory) and her husband Kakatiya Mahadeva and passed her crown to him, with the support of the loyal successors of her father's mahamandaleswaras.

One of those mahamandaleswaras who came to attain special eminence during Pratapa Rudra's regime was *Gandapendera* Tripurari Mahadeva, one of the successors of Gangaya Sahini. Evidently he attained a status higher than mahamandaleswara and was accepted as a maharaja. He had for a time Valluru Pattana as his capital. He maintained peace by repelling the aggression of the powerful Tamil warrior Kopperinjunga and reinstating the ruler of Nellore Manmaganda Gopala. He attained the titles of *Brahma Rakshaka* by protecting the votaries of dharma. He came to be known as the

greatest of the Turaga Sahinikas, in that age of horses and elephants as forces of war. He put down many a local revolt. He constructed a number of tanks, dug canals, founded villages, cleared forests and protected Brahmins and their social activities.

It was because of their contemporary but ruinous tradition of powerful nayaks' constant efforts to shake off the overlordship of the king or emperor that Ganapati Deva's kingdom receded to Telangana during the last decade of his rule and Rudrama too suffered loss of much of her sway over Hoysala areas. To restore the lost glory of the Kakatiya kingdom, Pratapa Rudra engaged himself in wars against rebellious nayaks, especially Ambadeva Maharaja. He indulged in the usual wasteful wars against his neighbours, Chola, Pandya and Hoysala rulers, gaining sway over all the feudatories right up to Kanchi in the first instance and, later on, right up to Trichinopoly.

During the rule of Pratapa Rudra Deva II, the country enjoyed peace and stability. So, he began to evince greater interest in arts of peace. He took pride in scholarship and offered patronage to poets, pandits and religious teachers. He was a great scholar in Sanskrit. His court was graced by Vidyanatha, the author of the famous Sanskrit work *Pratapa-rudra Yashobhushana*.

One noteworthy feature of those days was in spite of frequent movement of armies in a criss-cross manner across the country, the traders continued to carry on business as between mandalams and kingdoms; peasants carried on their agriculture and society maintained its hegemony on the bed-rock of dharma.[4] In towns, traders and nayaks built three-storied

4. More land was brought under cultivation in this than in any previous period, as is proved by the local records. These state that much of the forest in the Srisailam and other regions was cut down by the Kakatiya monarchs, Ganapati, Rudrama and more particularly Pratapa Rudra Deva; habitable and cultivable areas were vastly extended. They also encouraged irrigation facilities. See Yazdani, op. cit., p. 682.

brick-houses with wide enough doors and windows-a sign of social peace-and people lived in villages in a civic manner. Pack bullocks carried on their backs the commercial goods from one part to another and trade-guilds protected them from attacks of robbers. So, Marco Polo admired the preva lence of comparative social and economic prosperity and religious harmony and international and inter-regional trade and commerce in Rudrama's kingdom.

Textiles, dyeing, calico-painting, metal-work, stone and brick-work, paper industry, making of cups, shoes, arms, scents, spirits and liquors, mining provided employment for artisans. Exports include besides textiles, scents, such as opium, indigo. The chief imports were articles of luxury for the richer classes and horses and mules. (R.C. Majumdar, P. 397)

Regarding standard of living of people, the difference between that of wealthier classes and of the peasants was almost antipodal. While the ruling and official classes rolled in opulence and luxury, the tillers of the soil had a very low standard of living, their condition became miserable in times of famine, when no adequate relief measures could be provided. Amir Khusrav, a contemporary of the Sultanate observed that "every pearl in the royal crown is but the crystalised drop of blood fallen from the lawful eyes of the poor peasant".

Slavery was a recognised institution with the Sultans and Sultan Firūz Shāh had 200,000 of them. Besides condemning the prisoners of war to slavery, thousands used to be imported from Africa and other parts of Asia (R.C. Majumdar, 399).

Trade and Commerce and Merchants

During Kakatiyas and a century there-after, trade was carried on by merchants belonging to various castes or tribes; not only by the Vysyas but also by certain clans among Kammas, Telagas or Balijas. For instance, there were Muddana Setti, Gangamalli Setti, Malli Setti of Gauras,

(we have now Gaura Velamas in Anakapalle-Ed) and Linga Balijas, Gazula Balijas, Kunkuma Settis, who are both Kisans as well as merchants.

Srinatha was the famous poet laureate of the Reddi Kings of the coastal region who followed the example of Warangal court in encouraging commerce with the foreign countries, especially the islands in the Indian ocean like Java, Sumatra, Sri Lanka, Gulf countries. The poet extols the generosity and love of arts of one great millionnaire Avachi Timmaya Setti, who carried on trade and international commerce, in luxury goods, and queen's cosmetics. He owned fleets of sailing ships. There were also his brothers Nada Setty, Chanu Setty who imported many a costly Kashmire and Punjab products, ministering to King's pleasures. One Tirumala Nath Setty was also mentioned. Such rare and costly luxury goods as *Kasturi* (Musk) safflower, camphor, sandal wood, extremely thin, laced cloths known as muslins from Dacca and shawls, pearls, precious stones, gold and silver were being brought from China, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Iran, Sri Lanka, Goa, Punjab, Kashmir, Dacca, Bhutan, and Gulf Countries. Marco Polo who visited Andhra coast during Kakatiya period also testified that there were hundreds of such millionnaire merchants. According to him, the sailing boats used to be of great size, carrying 150, 200 or 300 people, five to six thousand baskets of pepper.

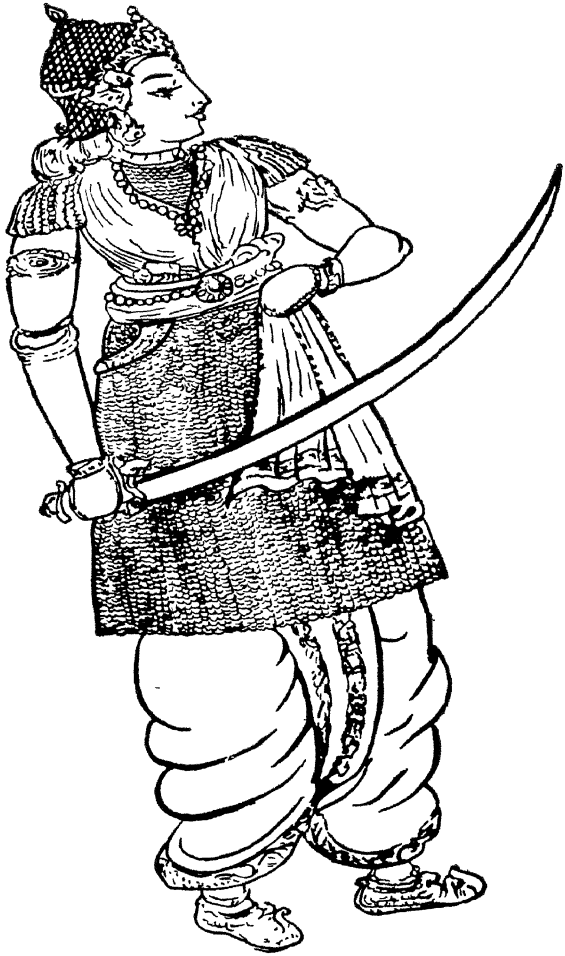
In those times, there used to be guilds of merchants and their chiefs were known as Settis, and they were of different castes; though the Komati, Beri Komatis were prominent. Even the one bullock and twinbullock kapus, with their settis as chiefs earned in trade, mostly in inland shandies or weekly markets, conveying goods in caravan of bullocks.

*The Mahamandaleswar of Addanki, Anapota Reddi restored peace and assured the merchants of Motupalli, the famous port on the Eastern Coast in 1358 of sympathetic administration and withdrew many vexatious duties and cesses imposed upon them during the decades of disturbances in the wake of Kapayas' fall.

(K L. Narayanu - Arya Vysya Charitra)

*He raised a stone pillar with the inscription of his assurances. He restored the privileges to merchants, which prevailed during the regimes of Kakatiya Emperors Ganapathi, Rudramba and Prataparudra. He appointed a Pragada or Chieftain to look after the port and developments. It is possible that the present-day clan of Pragadas among weavers are the successors of that Pragada of fourteenth century.

*(*K.L. Narayana – Reddirajula Kaalam*)



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QUEEN RUDRAMA DEVI

EMPEROR PRATAPA RUDRA DEVA (?)

V. KAKATIYAS *Vs.* DELHI

Pratapa Rudra and Fall of Warangal

Delhi had been under foreign domination for about a century, by the time Ala-ud-Din Khilji began in 1292-95 his efforts to bring South India also under his sway. Whoever ruled over Delhi had cherished the ambition of becoming the emperor of the whole of India. The wonder is why Delhi sultans waited for so long before Ala-ud-Din embarked upon his campaigns of conquest. It is equally a wonder why and how the kings or emperors, as they called themselves, of Maharashtra with Devagiri as their capital and those of Andhra with Warangal as their capital, Cholas of Tamilnad and Hoysalas of Karnataka had blissfully ignored the growing threat from Delhi, that too from the foreign votaries of Islam, who hated their religion, spurned their social custom and already subdued repeatedly so many of the Hindu rulers of the time-honoured dynasties and the long-established kingdoms.

The Delhi Sultan, who was smarting under the first defeat in 1294-95 at the hands of the imperial Yadava armies of Ramachandra Dev of Devagiri (1271-1309), sent his forces again against Devagiri and succeeded in defeating the Yadava king and his forces in 1306. His commander, Malik Kafur unfurled the Islamic flag over the ancient Hindu fort of Devagiri in 1315[1]. When Devagiri fought heroically and

1. Ramachandra Dev of Devagiri did not appreciate the significance of the expansion of the Muslim power in northern India or learn lessons from it. Probably he was not more to blame

... Continued on the next page

repulsed the first invasion from Delhi, Warangal did not think of forging a pact of mutual assistance against the possible future invasions from Delhi sultans. On the other hand, Kakatiyas tried to free themselves from Devagiri's supremacy in the wake of the troubled period that it was facing.

The nayaks of Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra were coming into political prominence during the same period, i e, the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries gaining their military honours and establishing their regal rights over their local domains, as mandaleswaras and mahamandaleswaras, even as the Afghan, Turkish and Persian Muslim leaders were establishing themselves at Delhi and in the domains of the sultans of Delhi. But unlike the Delhi's Muslim rulers, they were divided among themselves into so many religious sects, rivalling with each other and indulging in social boycotts and mutual wars, not to speak of their faith in the enervating caste and religious divisions and rivalries.

Even the farsighted Ganapati Deva of Kakatiyas failed to rise above the traditional antagonism of Kakatiyas towards Yadavas and respond nobly to the generosity shown towards him by Yadava Ramachandra Dev when he was a prisoner at Devagiri. He did not realise the wisdom of winning the friendship of the Yadava kings of Devagiri, which was the first bastion against any invader from the northern India. On the other hand, he indulged in a religious feud with the rulers and social leaders of that Yadava kingdom; that is, as between the Jains and Saivites and later as between Vaishnavites and Veera Saivas. Like all other Hindu rulers through the centuries, he too waged wars against the Cholas, Hoysalas, Gajapathis, Karnatakas and built, on the one hand, an empire, as temporary as that of Yadava Ramachandra Dev's revolts.

in this connection than his contemporaries at Warangal, Dwarasamudra and Madura, who were all too much actuated by personal jealousies to think of any action in common – "History of the Deccan", Vol. I, pp 554-555.

His great grandson, Pratapa Rudra, failed to realise how the Yadava king of Devagiri was growing jealous of his power and popularity. What is wrose, he did not think of making common cause with him by going to his rescue when Devagiri was attacked again by Malik Kafur, the commander of Ala-ud-Din. In those times, the Hindu kings did not realise the need for developing diplomatic relationships with the neighbouring kingdoms and negotiate and honour treaties of peace, co-operation and mutual assistance. All that they used to do was to bind each other, in mutual interest, through marriage alliances. Unfortunately, Kakatiyas and Yadavas did not develop even such social communion.

Encouraged by their victory over the Yadavas and spurred by their burning desire to loot the famed wealth, in diamonds, pearls, gold, ivory and unrivalled phalanxes of elephants of Warangal, the Mohammadan hordes of Delhi decided to invade the empire of Warangal.

It was only then that Pratapa Rudra woke up to his political responsibilities. He assembled the warrior-nayaks and appealed for their support. True to their traditional martial honour, they offered to resist the invasions.

Pratapa Rudra Deva used to hold his court in the mornings whenever he was in Warangal. Vidwans like Sakavelli Mallikarjuna Bhat, poets like Bhaskara, philosophers like Gunda Bhat, Pratapa Bhat, nayaks, king's brother Annama Deva, lenkas, chief commissioner Nissanka Vallabha, Sahini Maraya, Kolipaka Siddayya and other high officers, ambassadors of many kings used to be present in the Assembly. Ministers, including Sivadevayya, Sarabhanka, Mallikarjuna, Palakurtt Surappa were there to assist and advise him in

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Pratapa Rudra Deva was taught by the elder statesmen of Rudrama's cabinet, the principles of political science and precepts of the traditional dharma. His grandmother helped him to understand the problems and practices of statecraft by welcoming him from his 17th year into partnership in ruling the empire As was usual in those times, Pratapa Rudra must have been encouraged to study (i) Kautilya's "Arthashastra" (ii) Narayan Bhat's "Panchatantra"(iii) Bhartruhari's "Subhashita"also.

deciding the various matters of state. The court's sitting used to be over when it was time for lunch.

Pratapa Rudra made an innovation in the contemporary social protocols of kings. He abandoned the earlier practice of taking his meals all by himself and began the practice of inviting his nayaks, heroic lenkas and ministers to dinners and used to sit with them and honour them as comrades. This made his nayaks much more devoted to him as their emperor and beloved chief on the battle-field. Even a millionaire, Kotipalli Viswanathudu, remained loyal to Pratapa Rudra and offered his wealth to strengthen the struggle of the emperor against the invaders. It also alienated some of the old conservative mahamandaleswaras, who had been enjoying that privilege, as their special right. Bhoja Reddi was one of those discontented nayaks, who eventually joined Gannama nayak in betraying the emperor. On the whole, this comradely and less feudalistic and more democratic approach of Pratapa Rudra must have been responsible for the emergence of the Nayak Confederation, based upon equal, democratic order, among colleagues and comrades.

Pratapa Rudra turned the traditional organisation of lenkas consisting of the martial-minded youths into a dynamic order of sevaks of the Kakatiya regime, devoted to the person of the king and Kakatiya kingdom and their supreme duty towards Bharatiya dharma and welfare of the people. He welcomed all those youths who were ready to serve the country and the king to join this Order of lenkas and removed all bars that had till then prevented the youths of certain castes from joining it and dismissed all taboos. He thus increased the fighting strength of his armies and forts.

He tried to achieve greater unity among his own mahamandaleswaras and mandalikas by bringing about social amity. One such revolutionary and peace-making social effort made by him was to invite all cadres of nayaks to *saha-pankti bhojan* on the imperial social dining table in the Brahma Nayak tradition; i.e., equal and honourable precedence and

protocol for the nayaks of different clans, indicating the equality in court functions among all the invitees and their followers.

Thus the erstwhile Velamati chiefs, who had inter-married with the decadent Cholas of Nellore, Kanchi, Rajahmundry, Kolanu were brought into the Kakatiya imperial circle of nayaks like Velama or Velamati or Velugoti nayaks. Similarly, the Boyas, who were closely linked by blood with the Rayas of Kampili and some of whom were feudal chiefs of a part of Guntur were also promoted. But that was a very caste-ridden and precedence-bound society.

People who were in the fighting forces took pride in isolating themselves more and more from the clans from within their own social matrix in order to achieve social and political distinction, unlike the present age, with its readiness to applaud those who are good mixers and who pride themselves in identifying themselves with ever-broader cadres of masses. While it was doubtful how many new nayaks came to be bound in grateful loyalty to the emperor, quite a large number of older social sections of nayaks began to nurse great resentment.

It was at that socially unsettled and politically enervated juncture that Malik Kafur, the renowned commander of the cruel and bigotted Delhi emperor Ala-ud-Din again invaded Telangana and laid seize upon the Kakatiya capital, Warangal. For months, that struggle went on. The thousands of nayak veterans of many a battle and youths bubbling with ambition to out-rival the foreign invaders and inspired by the example of Mahabharata and Palnad heroes and uplifted by the stories of the great achievements of warrior-empress Rudrama, rallied under the banner of Pratapa Rudra. The forces of Pratapa Rudra and the powerful nayaks marched against the Muslim hordes. They fought furiously and bravely and succeeded in forcing the enemy to be content with tribute and conclusion of a Treaty[2].

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2. Soon after Malik Kafur's withdrawal to Delhi, a number of

...contd. on the next page.

There was the possibility of the Delhi Sultan repeating the invasion of Warangal to recover from the loss of prestige suffered from the first defeat. Though the Yadava empire had disappeared and the Delhi Sultan imposed his sway over Devagiri, the Yadava nayaks were smarting under Delhi's domination. The fact that both Ganapati and Rudrama, who were defeated and taken prisoners by Yadavas were released and allowed to return to Warangal to rule over the Kakatiya kingdom should have persuaded Pratapa Rudra, out of gratitude and atleast in self-interest, to attempt to gain the friendship of the Devagiri nayaks. But that feudalism nursed only the spirit of vengeance and not generosity and mutual understanding.

As if this was not a big enough weakness, Pratapa Rudra's and his ministers' vaunted championship of the Brahmin culture was opposed to the doctrines of Saivism and Jainism and their missionary zeal in popularising the *puranic* cult alienated not only the concerned powerful priests but also larger sections of the masses who were roused and raised to feats of heroism by their *veeras*' tempo (of veera saivism etc).

Pratapa Rudra again indulged in the suicidal but traditional luxury of *digvijaya yatra* by invading distant Kanchi for the second time, glorying in obtaining the fresh declarations of submission from his proud mahamandaleswaras, especially Ambadeva Maharaja, all along the way to and from Warangal and invading Hoysala regions but unsuccessfully. Thus he caused the depletion of the empire's resources in military strength and ranks of leaders.

The forces of the Sultan of Delhi used to reach Andhra sometimes by way of Devagiri in the north, at other times by way of Orissa and coastal Andhra and, therefore, Pratapa

important nayaks headed by Amba Deva of Cuddapah Kurnool districts and his ally and feudatory of Nellore declared their independence. So, Pratapa Rudra was obliged to march against them. He brought them again under his control.

Rudra's nayaks had to be on the alert on all sides to meet the enemy. On at least three occasions, the Andhra forces were able to repel the invaders, either from the banks of the Godavari or from the northern Andhra Kalinga – bordering Orissa. The nayaks covered themselves with glory in those battles. Sometimes they succeeded in capturing elephants and horses, besides much valuable booty from the invading forces[3].

Barni, a Muslim historian, admitted that "All nobles fled from the army - their soldiers and servants perished and their horses and arms fell into the hands of the Hindus. Ulugh Khan reached Devagiri in safety. Malik Tamor with a few horsemen plunged into the Hindu territories and perished there. Malik Tigin of Oudh was killed by the Hindus."

The Andhra forces fought bravely and offered unremitting sacrifices in defence of their coveted city and political independence. But through strategem and matching bravery, the Delhi forces gained fort after fort and eventually defeated the nayaks and their emperor and forced them to sue for peace and agree to pay tributes as well as indemnity in 1320–21.

It must have been an unbearable strain on the resources, in men, money, military equipment and entourage of Pratapa Rudra and his nayaks to continually face these terrible invasions over that period of 15 years, in addition to waging punitive wars against the Pandya king of Tamil Nadu, Malabar, Veera Ballala of Mysore and nayaks of coastal Andhra like Ambadeva Maharaja, and thus maintain internal hegemony and law and order. The plight of the masses must have been terrible under the weight of the taxes and compulsory levies exacted to cover the war expenses and the ravages caused by

3. There was never any 'No war' Pact or guarantee or immunity from invasion. Delhi forces were continually being reinforced by the war-like adventurers from Central and Western Asia who were fired by reigious frenzy as also by insatiable lust for the famous diamonds, pearls, gold and other types of famed wealth of Warangal.

the scorched earth policy pursued by both the invaders and defenders. It was an awful period of devastation.

Thanks to Tripurari Mahadeva, Gundaya Nayak (the patron of poet Machana), Gopi Nayak of Manvadi, Rudra Nayaka, Machaya Nayaningaru, Pochi Nayaka and the heroic and valorous support of lenkas and generalship of hundreds of other nayaks, Pratapa Rudra was able to keep the Delhi forces at bay, for months at a time, and tired them out and forced them to be content every time with a formal treaty of friendship and mutual tolerance and presents which were no doubt very valuable.

It is, indeed, highly creditable and heroic for the nayaks and their great leader, Pratapa Rudra, that unlike so many north Indian rulers who failed to offer concerted and effective opposition to Mohammad Ghazni and 143 years later, to the disastrous raids made by Mohammad Ghori, and after Ramachandra of Devagiri succumbed to the second blow from Ala-ud-Din, these Andhra warriors offered united and successful opposition on all but two fateful occasions and defended the national independence and political integrity of the whole of Dakshinapath, thanks to the exploits of the Order of Lenkas, developed so well by Pratapa Rudra.

After these awful experiences, he became circumspect and began to take steps to consolidate his forces.

One can easily imagine how highly developed and rich must have been the contemporaneous Warangal city of gold and diamond hoards, seven centuries ago. It was one of the six richest, strongest and highest fortified Indian cities of those days. No wonder, it became a matter of national prestige and social honour for the nayaks and lenkas to defend and protect it.

Repeatedly the Delhi forces were prevented from crossing the moat round the well-beloved Warangal fort by the Telugu *veeras* thanks to the inspiring contemporaneous '*veera*' cult of heroism exemplified by Khadga Tikkana, the nephew of

philosopher-poet Tikkana and the ennobling pattern of heroism woven by the warriors, young and old, of Palnad, led by Balachandra.

To give only one instance of nayaks' heroism: when the Delhi forces passed through the diamond-mining district of Basirgarh and besiezed Sarbar fort, the nayaks, lenkas and other Kakatiya forces put up a stiff defence and fought as desperadoes. When the fort walls were breached and scaled, most of the surviving warriors "lighted a huge fire and threw themselves into it with their wives and children." But the brother of the commander, one Anna Nid (Naidu) bowed to the inevitable, accepted to be the Muslim's vassal and work as kotwal.

But Pratapa Rudra, proud as he was and conscious of his imperial patrimony, was loathe to remit the periodical tribute to Delhi Sultan. He must have been encouraged in this imprudent policy by the equally proud nayaks who had been smarting under their unmerited defeats. They declared Warangal's independence. So, the Delhi forces came upon Warangal again. This time, the Delhi Muslim sardars led by viceroy Ulugh Khan knew so much more about the heroism, arms and military tactics and skill of the nayaks. and their followers as well as their forces of horses, elephants and manoeuvres. So they came better prepared to fight, overcome and defeat them. It is doubtful, however, if the nayaks and their emperor had tried to develop superior military forces, weapons and tactics, in the light of their previous struggles against Delhi forces. Certainly they fought bravely. They risked their all. They offered stiffest and powerful resistance over a long period. Warangal fort withstood the invasion for months thanks to the never-ending serried and avalanchic nayak forces, rushing upon the Muslim besiezers.

In the meanwhile, epidemics set in the midst of the Delhi forces, war-time diplomacy and camouflaging of the Kakatiya priests and ministers played havoc with the morale of the Muslims, who were made to believe that the Sultan, Ghias-ud-Din was dead and there was civil war in Delhi to settle the successor. So, Ulugh Khan, the claimant for the throne of his

father, raised the seize and hastily withdrew to Delhi, in 1321.

This was a great triumph for the nayaks of Kakatiya empire. So, Pratapa Rudra and his nayaks gave themselves up to month-long festivities. The state granaries were empited to feed lakhs of people for weeks in a festive manner. Treasury was emptied to distribute gifts, prizes to the nayaks, lenkas and others who risked their all in the battles. Large sections of the defence forces were demobilised to enable them to attend to their agricultural activities. While they were thus engaging in a non-war like social sprees. Delhi was getting ready for another invasion. Large numbers of the veteran nayaks and the heroic youthful sardars of their families and relatives sacrificed their lives during all those bitter wars at the altar of Bharatiya dharma.

During the third and fourth Muslim invasions, such seasoned warriors as Kolani Rudra Deva, Singaya Nayak, minister Muppadi Nayaka (The present Mupparanenis are his successors), Annaya, son of Gannaya or Gannama who later headed the fifth-column, distinguished themselves along with Prolaya and Kapaya. But every such successive and successful repulsion of Delhi forces by the Kakatiya nayaks only contributed to the growing weakness and depletion of the ranks of the latter and also to the ever-rising sense of depression and frustration. Pratapa Rudra, poet and scholar though he was, did not ignore those unpleasant realities.

Delhi would not allow them to rest in peace. While their ranks were being thinned, Delhi's forces were getting replenished by the steams of immigrant foreign Muslims through the Khyber and Bolan passes and also by many adventurous sardars who were hungering for the renowned Kakatiya treasures and military distinctions. So, Delhi forces marched (for the eighth time?) towards Warangal. Once again, the Kamma, Telaga, Reddi, Velama, Balija or Baliga, Boya, Mutrasu, Telika nayaks and the Brahmin priests-cum-nayaks, the forces of the guilds of Komatis and Telika people and their lenkas rallied under the *varaha* (boar) banner of Pratapa Rudra and went on fighting for weeks, slowing down

the march of the Muslim forces, from the Godavari up to Warangal Then they had to fight for days and weeks from within the heavy and tall mud-walls of that great fort. There were seven such walls between the heavy and tall outer mud-wall and inner stone-cum-brick fort and they kept on fighting as wall after wall fell.

It was said that for decades there were some traitors among the citizens, who were in league with the king and priests of Devagiri. Some disaffected nayaks also were intrigueing against Pratapa Rudra, because they were angry over the special favours conferred upon lenkas and some of the Velnad nayaks The principal kotwal, Gannama Nayak[4]; whom Pratapa Rudra raised to that key-position despite protests from many local nayaks, treacherously helped the invaders to enter the fort, gain control over the inner chambers, all so secretly and suddenly, because he was offered the viceroyalty over Telangana. There was also another equally important traitor, Terala Bhoja Reddi, who was placed in charge of a huge army. At long last, the Delhi forces triumphed finally in 1323 and Warangal was captured through the treachery of some nayaks and Kakatiya empire broke down.[5]

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4. Gannama's son, the patriotic Kamma Nayak made amends for his father's treachery by joining Prolaya Nayak confederation and fought for freedom.

5. Maremanda Rama Rao observes : "The first of these (invasions) was sent by Sultan Ala-ud-Din Khilji in 1308 A.D. but the Kakatiya generals met the invaders at Upparapalli, defeated and drove them away. Prince Ulugh Khan, son of Sultan Ghias-ud-Din Tughlak, undertook Delhi's invasion of Warangal "with the express object of annexing territory by defeating the Hindu rulers of the Deccan. The Kakatiya forces offered stiff resistance and the Muslim prince was defeated and forced to flee to Devagiri with much loss of men and material. He led a surprise attack in 1323 A.D. The greater part of the Kakatiya army was away in the South and the forces that were at the capital were not enough to repel the invader. In the final engagement, Pratapa Rudra Deva was captured and sent a prisoner to Delhi. He died on the way on the bank of Narmada" (Kaluvacheruvu inscription in JAHRS).

In such a feudal order, there were always some nayaks who were disaffected against the emperor, others who were too jealous of the favours conferred upon some nayaks; some who might be waiting for chances for bettering their fortunes and status by developing secret relations with neighbouring kings, to incite them to invade the territories in the hope of wreaking vengeance against the emperor for some real or imagined insult or injury caused at some *darbar*.

Disunity, mutual rivalry, ever-present atmosphere of suspicion of each other were the common featurrs of nayaks' system of feudalism of those days.

Every nayak's ambition was to gain supremacy over the neighbouring areas of his fellow nayaks and they remained content with their own dominions onlv so long as the long arm of their raja was strong enough to strike terror or punish the rebellions. They were loyal to the ruler only when he was too powerful or provided opportunities through invasions over neighbouring territories for displaying their prowess and gaining booty. That state of fluidity of loyalties and instability and law of the jungle, as it were, as between nayaks never allowed the Kakatiyas or Cholas or Hoysalas or Yadavas to achieve the minimum degree of hegemony, needed to resist and overcome the Muslim imperialists from Delhi.

In accordance with the Bharatiya dharma, Pratapa Rudra tried his best to pay compensation to all those peasants in villages and merchants in towns which were being devastated by those repeated invasions from Delhi. He had also to similarly compensate those whose properties were destroyed when he was himself waging wars repeatedly against his rebellious nayaks from Warangal up to Kanchi in the South It is quite possible he could not pay enough towards compensation because of the frequency of the wars and also because of the heavy tributes paid to Delhi and the burden of war indemnities imposed upon him by Delhi. So large sections of people were also disaffected.

Muslims, who had been ruling for generations over the country from Delhi to Devagiri and invaded Telangana

several times, had many opportunities to make friends with a number of disaffected nayaks and even traders and to gain contacts with a larger number of important people. They possessed better weapons. Their forces were better disciplined and led. They had invaded the country and gained sway, however temporarily, over all the kingdoms right up to Kanya Kumari and so they must have maintained contacts with many a nayak and prince of those regions.

One of the important causes for the repeated defeats sustained by the Kakatiya and other Indian forces at the hands of the Delhi and other foreign Muslim forces was their devotion to the millinium — long code of conduct during wars-sanctified by tradition and the legendary lore of Ramayana and Mahabharata. It is a fact that the Hindus and not always adhere so strictly to that extraordinarily humane system of warfare but their failures were always moderated by their faith in and attempts to conform to that code.

On the other hand, the invaders did not adhere to any code of honour or humanity in their cruel and passionate pursuit after success at any cost and by any means. They were egged on by their zeal to propagate their Muslim faith and to save the non-Muslisms from their idolatry by giving them the choice between their new Faith and death.

The Muslim historians and folk-lore bards enshrined in their chronicles that historic desecration of Indian wealth. The conquering Muslim hordes and their allies gathered the invaluable booty of age-old collections of diamonds from Vajra Karur and gold from the Telangana mines, pearls from the Tamil and Ceylon fisheries and gold and ivory from Mysore and sent them on elephants and in camel-loads to Delhi.

Pratapa Rudra Deva was taken a prisoner to Delhi, kept in a golden cage for exhibition throughout the country along the path, as a unique trophy to the Delhi Sultan. Many a nayak including Gannama, Bukka, Harihara were taken prisoners. Pratapa Rudra committed suicide, while bathing

in Narmada, though it used to be said that he returned to Warangal and ruled for a couple of years.

Some of the nayaks surrendered to the Muslim invaders and made peace with the new rulers. One of the great Brahmin ministers, Jagannatha Panditha had thus become a Muslim either voluntarily or under duress and rose to be the deputy prime minister of two successive Delhi emperors. Some more nayaks, who had intrigued with the Devagiri rulers must have gone over similarly to the side of the conquerors and were converted to Islam, after they were captured and taken to Delhi and exhibited there as the great trophies from Warangal. All that must have been galling to many of them and so they were determined to pay the new rulers in their own coin.

VI. PRATAPA RUDRA'S MARTYRDOM

The biggest and most precious trophy of the Muslim imperialists was the person of Veera Pratapa Rudra, being taken as the rarest of the prisoners of war. It was a wonder how the heroic emperor and so many of his veera nayaks and ministers came to be captured as prisoners of war in 1323. It could not have happened on the battle field, because those Kakatiya veeras of the Lenka Order would have succeeded in laying down their lives, with swords or battle-axes in their hands, rather than be captured *en masse.* It happened only when they were in council, by the betrayal of some of the fifth-columnists, lurking even in their inner-most councils. Who were they? Who could they be? What were the temptations offered? Certainly the agents of Devagiri must have provided the first base of operations for them. Some of the Kolanu chiefs who had been severely punished by Rudrama and later by Pratapa Rudra must have chosen to go over to the enemy, stealthily because of their unappeased hunger for revenge. We know that Gannama Nayak joined hands with the enemy. He was converted to Islam, re-named as Mohammad Maqbul and rewarded by being sent back as the viceroy to rule from Warangal on behalf of Delhi. We also know how Jagantha Pandita, one of the prominent ministers also followed the infamous example of Gannama.

It is said that Veera Pratapa Rudra committed suicide in the sacred river Narmada, as he was being taken to Delhi. Why did he commit suicide? It could not be because he feared death by torture. Pratapa Rudra had no fear of being beheaded in Delhi court, and so, his suicide was not an anticipatory act on his part.

Then why did he commit suicide? He came from the great Kakatiya House which provided leadership, maintained peace among the states and people of South India for almost a century. His Durjaya (unconquerable) clan claimed to have come from Karikala Chola ancestry. He could look back upon a century-long imperial glory of his House. All his ancestors from the times when they were Kamma nayaks to their recent century of regal status and powers as well as the contemporary nayaks, many of whom were his close relatives by blood or by virtue of their membership of Lenka Order, were consecrated to the cult of veeras, inspired by the sacrifices and devotion of nayaks of Pallava Rashtrakuta, Chola, Chalukya, Yadava dynasties of Dakshinapath. They were brought up to consider death on the battle-field as a meritorious passport to *Swarga Bhumi* (Land of Gods) and they fully believed that such a martyrdom was worth attaining. Would it be worthy of those thousands of veera nayaks, like King Rudra, Gangaya Sahini, Beta, who died so heroically on the battle-fields in defence of Bharatiya, Kakatiya order of national leadership, that he should be bowing before the Delhi Suitan? How could he bear the idea of his appearing in Delhi court as the prized prisoner of Islamic forces; and such an insult to be inflicted upon the Kakatiya House, ennobled by his noble grandmother Rudrama and her father Ganapati and great-grandfather King Rudra and for the sake of being returned, at best, as a provincial satrap of the alien Sultan, like Ramachandra of Devagiri? All the time, the thought of having been betrayed so shamelessly by so many of his trusted counsellors must have been galling to him. And they betrayed him in the hope of gaining feudatory powers from Delhi. If he was prepared to live and accept viceroyalty on behalf of Delhi, he would only be degrading himself to the same dishonourable status that his betrayers were hoping for. Could he brook such a fall! After all, he was not a mere Sanskrit scholar, poet and presiding diety over a brilliant, scholarly court, holding erudite discussions. He was also a seasoned warrior, successful leader on the battle-field and

winner of many a battle. It was under his leadership that the nayaks beat back the Delhi forces more than once. He was indeed the one and the only Hindu king who put the fear of God into the hearts of successive Delhi Sultans. He must have cursed his fate for not having died on the battle-field like the thousands of his more fortunate nayaks and beloved lenkas. So, he decided to die, in the embrace of the sacred waters of Narmada. Thus, Pratapa Rudra robbed the Delhi Sulan of his greatest trophy, almost in the moment of his triumph. By that brave act, he condemned the treachery of the fifth-columnists and treated with the utmost contempt their ambitious and immoral deals with the Islamic invaders. He spoke by that symbolic, if heart-rending act, to all the nayaks, especially to the members of the Order of Lenkas and their followers who had survived the battle, that it would be best for all those who could not fight for the freedom of Kakatiya domains and peoples and vanquish the invaders to die fighting as heroes, as befitting their Kakatiya dharma, rather than live in slavery and shame. By his voluntary self-immolation, he threw the political field open as a challenge to all the nayaks, to fight Delhi's imperialism, to liberate the people and to re-establish Indian dharmic rule. But that noble sacrifice, Pratapa Rudra has become ever since, the patron-saint of all nayak Houses of all kisan tribes and the exemplar for all the successive generations of warriors of South India. To this day, there is a legend, which is epitomised by famous play *Pratapa Rudreeyam* written by the great Sanskrit-cum-Telugu scholar, Vedam Venkatraya Shastri, that Pratapa Rudra did escape from imprisonment and returned to Andhra. An inscription of 1326 found in Guntur district lends evidence to this legend.

It is quite possible that Prolaya and his nephew Kapaya, who were busy rousing the people to revolt against the Muslim imperialists had sedulously propagated this legend in the initial stages of the revolution that the beloved emperor did not die languishing in prison or did not commit suicide but was actually leading and guiding them in their revolutionary struggle through guerilla activities and other preparations for the formation of their Nayak Confederation.

Princes Harihara and Bukka of Kampili, who were related to Kakatiya princes of Prolaya and Kapaya, agreed to accept to go back to Kampili as governors but they had also to undergo conversion to Islam. They went back to their own former dominions as governors but as the agents of Delhi. So, the people were not reconciled to them and the revolts continued. They then came under the influence of Vidyaranya and thought it fit to abandon Islam, re-embrace Hinduism and thus be reconciled to their people. So, the people again hailed them as leaders.

News of these developments was reaching Delhi and while the Sultan was wondering what to do, a large number of the newly converted nayaks and ministers were deciding upon following the patriotic example set up by Harihara and Bukka and accepting the leadership of Prolaya-Kapaya. They felt ashamed of Gannama Nayak's betrayal and cowardice.[1]

We do not know how many of them succeeded in coming back to Warangal before Harihara's revolt and how many thereafter and in what manner managed to get out of the clutches of Delhi and when and how they succeeded in returning to their old fold. We only know that a large number of nayaks who had been forcibly converted to Islam or had also been imprisoned or kept merely as hostages managed to return to Warangal, first as the agents of Delhi and thereafter, abandoned Islam and openly joined the revolt and national revolution under Prolaya's leadership.

1. Read novels by Nori Narasimha Sastri to realise the tribulations of these apostate nayaks of Kakatiya forces.

VII. FERMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

The government of Mohammad-bin-Tughlakh that came to control the destinies of the people in the South after the fall of Warangal inflicted the heavy tax burdens and oppressive collection processes to which the people in the northern India were subjected.[1] Zia-ud-Din Barni, a contemporary writer described the extent of persecution and impoverishment which all classes of people suffered from in northern India.

"The Sultan thought that he ought to get 5 or 10 per cent more tribute from the lands in *Doab*. To accomplish this, he invented some oppressive *abwabs* (cesses) and enhanced land revenues until the backs of the *raiyats* were broken. The cesses were collected very rigorously. Hindus were made to feel their position of inferiority in the body politic."[2] The Delhi Sultan passed an ordinance stating that there should be left only so much to the Hindus that neither on the one hand should they become intoxicated on account of their wealth nor on the other, should they become so destitute as to leave their lands and cultivation in despair.

With each triumph over the Hindu kingdoms, the Muslim rulers indulged in the inhuman practice of killing Hindus en masse, mass conversions and their distribution as slaves among various Muslim chieftains and officers. All the male prisoners were impaled on stakes. This done, their women were slain along with their children, their hair being tied to the stakes[3]. Alexander Rea, superintendent of the archaelogical department recorded: "Temples, priests, their treasures and worshippers were dishonoured or destroyed. Rajamahendravaram's mosque was built in 1324 by Muhammad Tughlak Shah. He entered a temple here and after

1. M. Somasekhara Sarma, "Forgotten Chapter of Andhra History."
2. M. Somasekhara Sarma, ibid. p. 59.
3. M. Somasekhara Sarma, ibid.

massacring some of the officiating brahmin priests, had this mosque built on the ruins of the desolated Pagoda and established Muhammadan worship there. The tank in the interior was once the sanctum of the Hindu temple. The great portico just behind this also has some ornamental granite pillars of the Hindu temple with the rest in Hindu style."[4]

Similarly the maszid in Budupur near Palamur was once a temple. There are many inscriptions on its walls of gifts made by Kakatiya nayaks. Many a temple of Tripurantakam and Penukonda met with similar fate. The plight of the Hindus could be understood from the experience of the temple authorities of Srirangam. When Mohammadan forces arrived at Srirangam in 1327 after destroying Dwarasamudram, they conveyed the idol by a circuitous route to the western coast; thence to Melukot in Mysore and from there to Tirupati sacred hill. There it was kept safe till 1371 when Kampana II of Vijayanagar conquered and pacified the Tondamandalam Chola and his general Gopana brought the image back to Srirangam in triumph.[5]

In his 'Vilasa Grant', Prolaya Nayak or Protanedu of the Musunuru family records the following about the tyrannical rule of the Delhi Sultan, after the defeat of Pratapa Rudra and subjugation of Andhra. "In a hundred sinful ways the rich were tortured for the sake of money; merely on beholding the *parasikas* (Muslims) some abandoned their lives. Brahmins were disallowed to perform their religious rites and rituals. Temples were destroyed and idols were desecrated and broken. All the Agraharas, which had long been in the enjoyment of the most learned, were taken away. Forcibly deprived of the fruits of their cultivation, the husband-men, both the rich and the poor, got ruined. In that great calamity, people could not regard their money, wives and other earthly belongings as their own. The Yavanas (Muslims) revelled always in drinking wine, eating cows' flesh, sporting in armours. When such

4, "History and Culture of Indian People" (on Delhi Sultanate),
5. "Historical Inscriptions of Southern India".

is the case, how could the world of living beings exist? Without the possibility of a saviour, the country was in flames like a forest surrounded by wild fire."[6]

When wars are waged for mere invasion, pillage and personal or class or religious aggrandisement, as the Muslim forces of Delhi Sultan did, armies become impervious to the promptings of conscience or culture or code of humanism.

Between the 11th and 15th centuries, the Hindus, by their loyalty—however weak—to the noble code of humane warfare, paid a bitter price. Their temples were destroyed, their libraries were burnt down, their teachers and saints were either deprived of their tongues or lives, their women dishonoured, their children put to the sword, their cows bled, their civilians robbed, dishonoured and killed on a mass-scale.

The religious leaders of different parts of Dakshinapath like Vidyanatha, Vidyaranaya, Bhaskara, Annaya, tried their best to rouse the common people as well as their military and political leaders to resist the invaders, to revolt against their regimes, to drive them away and regain their land for the observance of their traditional humane dharma. It was in answer to that call that the noble Andhra warrior nayaks led by Prolaya, Kapaya, organised the revolutionary movement in Andhra and Harihara and Bukka Raya of Hampi and Veera Ballala of Hoysala raised their banners of revolt.

The barbarism and inhumanity that the Muslim invaders indulged in, were the common features of all contemporary aggressors and invaders in other parts of Asia and Europe. For instance, the Portuguese, who were establishing themselves in Goa and other Indian coastal places, imposed the dreadful institution of inquisition against non-Christians and Christian heretics. Fryer, a traveller reported that they (the Protuguese) "burn all those condemned by the Inquisitor." Historian Sewell remarked:

6. M. Somasekhara Sarma, ibid.

"the fathers of the Church forbade the Hindus under terrible penalties, the use of their own sacred books. They destroyed their temples and mosques and so harassed and interfered with the people that they abandoned the city (Goa), in large numbers, refusing to remain any longer in a place, where they had no liberty and were liable to imprisonment, torture and death, if they worshipped after their own fashion". That such barbaric persecution of their opponents was meted out not only to their religious enemies but that it was a common political feature of that age is exemplified by the following event: "When the nephew of Mohammad-bin-Tughlak rebelled in Malwa, he was pursued by the Sultan into the Deccan and was taken prisoner and flayed alive." [7]

Though the earlier campaigns of religious persecution, bigotry and violence indulged in by the Yadavas of Devagiri and Kakatiyas against each other were retrograde, the cruelty inflicted upon Hindus of the South by the Muslim invaders from Delhi were very unfamiliar to the people. The demonical scale on which this inhuman and contemptuous destruction of lives of the civilian masses was indulged in with blood-thirsty thoroughness was shocking to the Hindus. Moreover, while the earlier religious disputants—Buddhists, Jains and Saivites—did not differ from each other over the people's need for temples, mandirs, *aramas* and other places of worship and their philosophical approaches, the religion of the Muslim invaders seemed to challenge all the philosophical and religious foundations and approaches. The thoroughness with which this genocide was practised changed the whole political atmosphere of Dakshinapath and introduced a qualitative change in its total approach to life. It was against this terrible challenge to the whole of Indian approach to God and humanity that the nayaks of Dakshinapath organised their revolution.

To illustrate the noble and human traditions adhered to by the Hindu kings and warriors and their honourable standards of treating the vanquished as prevailed in the 15th century, we record here what the famous Andhra poet Srinatha said

7. Elphinstone, "History of India".

through his description of an important incident in the Palnad battle that took place in the 11th century, on the banks of Nagavali, the tributary of river Krishna.

Narasingaraj the heir-apparent and brother of Nalagamaraj, the king of Palnad was killed in the battle by Balachandra, the son of Brahma Nayak, the leader of the rival group, fighting for ascendancy in that state. When Balachandra was bringing the head of Narsingaraj to present it to his father as a trophy, Brahma Nayak, who was in darbar and all his generals and others rose in honour of the dead and rendered military honours and homage to Narasingaraj, befitting that princely warrior. They did not dismiss it merely as the severed head of their bitter opponent, nor did they display any glee over their triumph. The battle was then suspended for the day, so that all could take part in the funeral ceremonies.

If we contrast this with the vengeful and barbaric treatment meted out to Veera Ballala III, the great warrior of that age, or to the youthful and heroic prince, Vinayak Dev, we can realise why the Kakatiya nayaks and their priests were able to evoke such universal response to their call for revolt and why they were hailed as the leaders of national revolution.

The Kakatiya nayaks realised, after the fall of Warangal and the death of Pratapa Rudra and the return of Gannama Nayak as Delhi Sultan's viceroy with his new name Malik Nabi Maqbul, how their blindness to what was happening in northern India as a result of Muslim conquest of Delhi and consolidation of power for generations and their failure to take any defensive steps to achieve unity among themselves and the Yadavas of Devagiri, had brought about the first downfall of the Yadavas and finally their own. They and their religious preceptors realised the power of religious unity of Muslims and their own weakness caused by religious feuds. Their caste and clan schisms must have looked so petty and weakening in the face of the dynamic unity among the Muslim invaders.

They had to take their fateful decisions quickly but heroically; some decided to surrender to the Muslim invaders and

make peace with them. One of the eminent Brahmin ministers Jagannatha Panditha had thus become a Muslim either voluntarily or under duress and rose to be the deputy prime minister of two successive Delhi emperors Quite a number of the nayaks who were forcibly converted to Islam, after they were captured and taken to Delhi as prisoners were determined to pay the Muslim rulers in their own coin. They, therefore, pretented to be loyal to the Sultan, managed to win his confidence and got themselves appointed as governors and chiefs of mandalams. Once they entrenched themselves in their respective military-cum-political positions, they hearkened to the patriotic appeals made to them and their loyal forces by sage Vidyaranya of Kampili, Annaya Mantri of Kammanadu, Veera Ballala of Dwarasamudram, Prolaya and Kapaya of the Musunuru House, abandoned Islam and threw away the Delhi shackles.

But a number of nayaks were content to remain loyal to their new religion of Islam and the new master, the Sultan. Some of them were given posts at the Delhi court, others were sent back to the South as subedars. One such was Gannama nayak, with his Muslim name Malik Nabi Maqbul, who returned to Warangal as the viceroy. These treacherous converts proved to be more troublesome than the foreign Muslim governors, because they knew the social fabric of the South and the everpresent and pestering internal jealousies as between castes, clans and families. So they continued to weaken the ranks of nayaks and sow the seeds of discord, even as the patriotic nayaks were rallying under the Varaha banner of Kakatiyas of Andhra-Karnatak.

Many more patriotic and self-respecting nayaks preferred to go into wilderness to accepting slavery and they refused to embrace either Islam or nayankaram or mandaleswara status under the Muslims. They turned their backs on the wealth, power and patronage that the triumphant Muslims were offering to such of the nayaks who were chicken-hearted, defeatist and opportunistic, as were willing to take service under the Delhi Sultans. Most of them had sustained so many wounds. All of them ran the risk of their mandalams being confiscated.

Yet they chose to be free and ferocious in their moutainous lairs and await better times to strike again for freedom.

So many nayaks had given up all political activity and so many were taken prisoners. It was not so easy to put heart into all the nayaks who had taken shelter in exile in the forests and mountains and inspire them so much as to make them rush into military action again. It must have been a more difficult task to persuade the dynamic and war-minded nayaks to sink their personal ambitions for supreme leadership and agree to fall in line behind Prolaya Nayak. Having been freed from their subordination to Kakatiya emperor and lost their own domains, why should they again place themselves under yet another nayak without biding their time to regain their fiefs as independent domains, unless they could be persuaded to realise their inescapable duty to join hands with other nayaks in their confederacy, under the leadership of one among them, that is, Prolaya?

It was in the course of that soul-searching interregnum of about ten years after the fall of the Kakatiya empire and loss of their political power that the heroic nayaks had the need and opportunity of reconsidering their political and religious aims and ideals.

The sages and savants, the poets and preists, the venerable nayaks of the houses of Ambadeva, Tripurari, Kolanu, Kota and Mummadi Beta, Bhakti Raja of Eruva, Prolaya Vema of Addanki provided the catalytic influence and inspiration. The youthful elements among the nayak forces, notably lenkas came to the fore during that painful period of heart searching.

Most of the great nayaks must have laid down their lives during those terrible five years of national resistance to the Muslim imperialists, which claimed such heavy toll in leadership. So, the nayaks who survived were able to understand the strong points of the invaders and their own weak-points. They were also more free than the deceased nayaks of the older generation, from the prejudices and passions against each other's clans, Houses, tribes and inclined to get together

more readily and developed a confederate leadership. So instead of chosing Prince Ammaya Deva, the brother of their famous and beloved Emperor, Pratapa Rudra as their chief, as the earlier tradition would have it, they welcomed Prolaya, one among them, as their chief, because he was young, bold, powerful and skilful in warfare, tempered by the tribulations, and wounds caused by his participation not only in the Kakatiya battles but also in the many local wars or skirmishes waged against many a local Muslim mandaleswara.

This united effort of the nayaks under Prolaya's leadership and the political and social wars that they waged, assumed for the first time in Indian history, many of the characteristics of a national revolution.

VIII PROLAYA AND KAPAYA

Kisan Warriors of Bharat Dharma

These were the times when the social life of the people was specially centred round the temples, priests and their preceptors. Jainism was on the wane. Saivism of the militant type, avowing its faith in Veera Basava's teachings and Veera Vaishnavism were growing very popular. Even Harijans were drawn into the centre of the renascent Hindu society. For more than 50 years, the recitation from Telugu Mahabharata which must have been going on in all courts and agraharams had familiarised the people with Hindu maxims of kingly dharma.

So, the masses felt very much horrified by the vandalism displayed by the equally militant and more intolerant Muslims of Delhi. To find their temples[1] destroyed, their priests murdered or forcibly converted and their agraharams, schools and colleges abolished, hurt them very deeply. The confiscation and plunder of the accumulated hoards of precious metals and jewels belonging to the people and the temples shocked the people. People were in an excited mood and tempo to hail as their champion a heroic leader with the requisite feudal traditional authority martial prowess, heroic record and patriotic fervour.

The village panchayats of the Chalukya and Chola times continued to play an effective role in the Andhra of Kakatiya era. They acted as a healthy check on the vagaries of the feudal lords.

They protected the people from any unpopular or undharmic moves and militarism of the feudal lords. For instance,

1. In the tradition of Cholas, the temples were then used as banks and as inviolable and trustworthy public trusts and villagers used to keep their surplus wealth in them.

according to Bharatiya dharma, land revenue could not be more than one-sixth of the net income; people's deposits in temple vaults had to be respected and Brahmins' privileges and the autonomy of craft and trade guilds could not be interfered with and temples' properties were respected as inviolable and beyond the government's control. The new rulers from Delhi refused to respect all those traditional injunctions and limitations on the power of the conqueror. Naturally the masses as a whole, functioning through their leaders in panchayats, guilds, temple committees and priestly cadres, rose in revolt against that inhuman sacrilegious challenge to their most intimate and life-giving activities, privileges and practices. It is this irresistible and irrepressible universally-felt agony that Prolaya expressed so eloquently in his inscription.

If we keep in mind the contempt displayed by Ala-ud-din even for Muslim religious injunctions regarding the relations that should subsist between the ruler and the ruled of his own faith and his attempts to control markets, prices and requisition of foodgrains, we can realise how arbitrarily and dictatorially his conquering hordes and their commander Malik Kafur must have ill-treated the Hindus of the South and violated the time-honoured privileges and freedom of the self-governing village panchayats. Muhammad-bin-Tughlak imposed a dictatorship which was worse. His attitude towards people's sentiments and rights was not less cruel and dictatorial. So, he followed more oppressive policies and implemented more biting programmes of persecution and pauperisation of the public. The occupation troops and their get-rich-quick-minded commanders whose main aim was to plunder, who presented their impossible demands to the village elders, in exchange for avoiding indiscriminate plunder or murder, came to be looked upon as the very *rakshasas* (devils) by those puranic-minded and self-governing rural masses and urban guild Sreshtis. So, the harassed masses must have been praying for God's descent as an *avatar* (incarnation) for delivering them from those tyrannical and monstrous invaders. The advent of Prolaya was the answer.

Who was that legendary rebel? Some said he was one of the sons of Veera Pratapa Rudra [2] Others said he was one of the great nayaks of that age. Certain it is that he was related to the royal House of Kakatiya in honourable Indian tradition of blood relationship. That is, he must have belonged to one of those many Houses within the circle of ruling families of the clans which had marital relations with one or the other of the numerous close *raja bandhus* (king's relatives) of the Kakatiya imperial family.

Prolaya Nayak of Durjaya clan and from Musunuru family[3] ought not to be mistaken for Addanki Nayak.

Prolaya responded to the call of his times when he decided upon what must have then appeared to be a super-human task of regaining the freedom of the Dakshinapath from the clutches of the victorious Delhi imperialism. He was assured of sympathy and support from these powerful nayaks, and their scions, most of whom had also been deposed by the Muslim invaders.

He was the most dynamic and dauntless nayak, possessing just the gifts of initiative, organisation and military skills. His exploits in the last series of battles that the Kakatiyas fought

2. According to the biography written in Telugu prose by Ekambranath, Pratapa Rudra had two sons, Virpuaksha Deva and Veerabhadra Deva and the former had chosen to go with his uncle Maharaja Annama Deva into the forest areas to the north of the Godavari river and found a new kingdom, Bastar, in the fastnesses of Vindhya and Satpura hills, which would be beyond the control and reach of the invaders from Delhi. Prince Veerabhadra Deva is also said to have been propped up by the more powerful and dynamic nayaks who dared to organise the rebellion against the Muslim conquerors of Warangal and, therefore, he could not aim at or achieve the leadership of the Nayak Confederation.
3. There are villages called Musunuru in Nellore, Krishna and Godavari districts. There are many kisan families with the surname of Musunuri in many delta districts of Andhra and they all claim to belong to the same kisan clan and proudly hail Prolaya Nayak as their clansman.

against the invaders before Warangal fell, had won the admiration of all the nayaks and thus marked him out as the supreme nayak among all the youthful heroes of those struggles.

He must have received some signal recognition of his military exploits, heroic deeds and meritorious services from the hands of Pratapa Rudra, before his final capture by the invaders. Moreover, before Pratapa Rudra committed his person to the Narmada waters, he must have sent a special message as well as a signet ring and jewels through some loyal nayak to his wife, Queen Visalakshi, Prolaya and others, indicating his special preference for Prolaya and appealing to the surviving nayaks to rally round the Varaha banner of Kakatiyas and regain the lost freedom of the country

Prolaya must have been in his late forties and his cousin Kapaya in his thirties, judging from the wise and statesman-like manner in which the former helped the proud nayaks to come together into the Confederation and act unitedly. For two decades, his cousin Kapaya organised the people in a dynamic manner and led their confederate military forces and saw to it that the mutual agreements of co-operation that were achieved by Prolaya were enforced.

Prolaya was more a nationalist than a feudatory, empire-building egoist. He was religious without being a begot and so was able to win the co-operation of nayaks avowing various Hindu approaches to God. He succeeded in gaining the confidence and support of the Veera Saivites, the Vaishnava *bhaktas* and made them all feel that through his leadership, Hinduism and its sects, drawing inspiration from Vedas and Upanishads would regain vigour and supremacy.

He did not incur the hostility or ill-will of his fellow nayaks by taking part in Pratapa Rudra's police actions. He distinguished himself, during those two decades of Kakatiyas' defensive wars with the Delhi forces by his valour, vigour and strategy. He belonged to the younger cadre of nayaks, who were coming to the fore during Pratapa Rudra's regime, without

exciting the jealousy of the power-mongering and ever-mutually rivalling senior nayaks. So, when misfortune overtook the Kakatiya emperor, when disruptive nayak politics helped the traitors to betray the emperor into the hands of Delhi imperialists and when the disintegration of the nayak-based Dakshinapath threatened the stability of the country, Prolaya and his friends were ready on hand for the people to turn to and to be welcomed and embraced as their leaders, with excellent records of heroic deeds and unimpeachable patriotic achievements and postures. The people who were shocked by the magnitude of the treachery perpetrated by Gannama Nayak, holding such an extremely strategic position as the kotwal of the capital, and his allies, would naturally be hesitant to trust their loyalties to anyone who would offer to fight for them, unless they were sure of his past records of loyalty to their beloved dynasty, their intimate religious faith and their conception of dharma. Prolaya more than satisfied all such standards and set at rest what all reasonable doubts they could entertain.

The emergence of Prolaya, as that leader was the answer from Gods, as it were, to the prayers of the people.

Prolaya proceeded to work in such a way as to win the confidence of both his fellow nayaks and religious leaders, who used to wield immense influence with the nayaks and their darbars and power over the masses. He started to regain his own forts by the Godavari, fortify them in an impregnable manner. He was happy that Prince Annama Deva, the aged and wise brother of Pratapa Rudra established himself on the northern side of Godavari, in the Bastar heights by the side of the sacred river Pampa and he could always retreat into that easily defendable area, when the worst came to the worst. He won the support of the Kolanu chiefs of Chalukya-cum-Chola heritage, who had been attached to the Kakatiya emperors from the times of Ganapati Deva and Rudrama Devi. He achieved their friendship thanks to the statesmanship of those nayaks and the sagacious advice given to them by Annaya Mantri, the political-minded leader and Kolanu Rudra Deva. The chieftains of Korukonda and Rajahmundry were glad to

reinforce Prolaya's efforts, because they were bent upon regaining the temples and thus fulfilling the demands of their outraged people to re-establish those emblems of national dharma and prestige. They were glad to place their trust in Prolaya, their relative and the master of the river-side impregnable forts. Having thus made sure of strength and support from both sides of the great Godavari and from the coast right down to Kolanu, Prolaya took account of the achievements of his nephew Kapaya and Komati Vema Reddi, son of Prolaya Reddi, who had been simultaneously operating from Addanki to Amaravati.

While the Delhi forces were more keen on consolidating their power in Telangana, Prolaya found that it was much less difficult to attack and defeat their smaller garrisons in the forts situated in the coastal plains.

There were also many nayaks like Singaya Nayak of Recherla, who were proud of their tradition of being the allies of Kakatiya rulers from Rudra's times. They were having friendly attachments with the Devagiri nayaks and were not so keen on coming out into the open in favour of the acceptance of these new Kakatiya leaders. It could not have been so palatable to them to rebel in alliance with the Prolaya—Kapaya combination against the Muslim rulers. But the atmosphere of patriotic revolt strengthened the leadership of Prolaya Nayak who appealed for popular support in the name of Pratapa Rudra Deva and the Kakatiya tradition of good governance.

Those freedom-loving nayaks wanted to develop inspiring objectives for their revolt against the Muslim imperialists. So, they declared themselves to be in favour of the protection of Bharatiya Dharma, freedom of religion and worship and sanctity of temples and the championship of their culture and the protection of peasants and village commonwealths and guilds of artisans and traders. These common objectives were hailed universally with equal fervour by all the Andhras, whether they professed Veera Vaishnavism, Basava's Veera Saivism, *varna ashram dharma* or even Jainism.

The campaigns of Prolaya Nayak against the Muslim forces received the wholehearted and powerful support of the influential, politically awakened and spiritually inspired priests. They were in every fort and town, village and hamlet and indeed, in every forest, by the side of every river, landing or resting place. They risked their all. They worked incessantly. They were indeed the ever-awake emissaries, missionaries and catalytic forces of that national revolution because they felt convinced of their dharma and its ultimate triumph.

Just as Swami Vidyaranya roused the princes of Kampili and Karnatak, the princes of the Houses of Tripurari Mahadeva and Gangaya Sahini, so also the veteran leader Annaya Mantri of Pratapa Rudra Deva, persuaded Prolaya of Koppula, Ganapati of Manchikonda, Vema Reddy of Addanki and many other nayaks to rebel against the Muslim domination and accept Prolaya, son of Pocha Nayak, grandson of Pota of the Durjaya family of Kakatiyas as their leader in the struggle, especially as he was intimately related to a large number of fellow princes in Andhra and Karnatak.

Tikkana's epic-poem already won the approval of pundits and poets and admiration of the nayaks and their darbars. Its recitations, interpretations and *kalakshepams* became especially topical and inspiring in view of the horrible experiences of the people during the Muslim invasions and the desecrations of their sacred temples and abominations perpetrated against priests, religious observances of people and inhuman atrocities committed against women and children. People realised that what Dussasana of Kauravas had done against Queen Draupadi Devi was nothing when compared with what Delhi Muslims did against so many thousands of their venerable mothers, sacred sisters and beloved wives. Their studies and recitations of that noble epic, Mahabharata, raised their moral indignation at the Muslim rule to boiling point.

Prolaya was wise to gain the support of the Brahmins, *bhatrajus* (ballad singers) and bards associated with each caste, who provided the religious justification and publicity

so much needed to keep up the morale of the masses. They put their *puranic* lore to very effective political use. They gave prominence to the Kakatiya political emblem of Varaha which was anathema to Muslims. While Muslims believed that they would go to Heaven if they killed Kafirs and died in war, the priests popularised the Mahabharata faith that whoever fell on the battle-field would surely ascend to Heaven and its glories. Did not the Kauravas who persecuted Pandavas go to Heaven long before the Pandavas, because they died on the battle-field? When they found to their horror, how Muslim forces were dishonouring captive women and even butchering them, they exhorted Hindu women to perform *sati* rather than fall into the Muslim hands. They propagated the faith among women folk that just as Queen Draupadi came to be vindicated, they and their cause too would ultimately triumph in dharma.

The people responded to the call of dharma thanks to the power and influence of the preachings of the Brahmins.

Prolaya entrusted to Kapaya and his coastal colleagues the arduous task of winning the co-operation of such of the nayaks who had ruled over the feudal domains in Telangana, Rayalaseema, Tamil Nudu, Karnatak and Hoysala areas. He boldly came forward to discharge that highly difficult and delicate diplomatic mission. He had to reason with all those nayaks and gain their consent to *(a)* wage war against the Sultan's forces, *(b)* co-ordinate their activities and develop an united front under a supreme leader to protect the whole of Andhra and Karnatak areas from any future invasions from the Muslim hordes from the North.

Kapaya negotiated with the fellow Kamma nayaks of the forts in Pakanadu, Koppula, Kanigiri, Amaravati and Korivi *seemas* (regions), who had established themselves as the natural successors to the erstwhile Velanati Chola chiefs, by virtue of their prowess, nayanakarams and inter-marriages with the Choda princely families of Chandole (Dhanya Kataka). They became independent on the fall of Pratapa Rudra. But they realised the need for mutual co-operation.

So, Prolaya Nayak of Koppula, Rudra Deva, Ganapati Nayaka of Velanadu and Prolaya Vema Reddi[4] were also glad to join hands with Kapaya.

They welcomed his mission as they had known about his achievements and exploits during the successive wars waged by Pratapa Rudra against the rebels in Nellore, Valluru Pattana of Kayasthas and Kanchi. Many of them were his comrades-in-arms during the emperor's police actions. They knew how bravely he fought in the defence of their beloved citadel, Warangal. They developed great admiration for his championship of national dharma which was epitomised in the eloquent Telugu epic of Mahabharata. They all knew that he was working in concert with his famous and revolutionary uncle, Prolaya. So they agreed to strike for freedom once the call was given.

Kapaya was hailed by them as playing the role of Prince Arjuna, on the advice and under the leadership of Prolaya, the veritable prototype of Dharmaja of Kurukshetra.

It was in that atmosphere of popular movement, sacred mission and priestly blessings Kapaya and his comrades made their rapid marches in their mission, avowedly so risky and daring, to gain friends, allies and associates for their campaign against Muslim imperialists of Delhi.

In those times, the larger part of the countryside was full of forest-growth, thick and impassable in some parts and shady and bushy in other parts ; but certainly infested to a much greater degree with wild animals. There were no public postal or telegraph or telephone facilities. Of course, there could be no newspapers nor could there be facilities for propaganda by pamphleteering as most of the people were illiterate.

4. For instance, Prolaya Vema Reddi assumed independence after Pratapa Rudra's fall and captured Amaravati from the closest relative of the Kakatiya Emperor and ruled from Amaravati between 1335-45. The leaders of the Confederacy had to move so dexterously as to retain the loyalty of such nayaks who were impatient to expand their own domains. ("The Historical Inscriptions of Southern India").

So, Prolaya, Kapaya and their associates, sometimes together, and sometimes separately, had to march in groups, on horseback, move during day time in forests and among hills and alongside river banks, making haste but slowly and cautiously.

In many a village they found ready and hearty welcome In such places, they must have been received by the panchayat elders, with the usual royal courtesies, associated with village assemblies and as becoming their princely status and popular mission. Feasting and celebrating their presence, reciting relevant ballads about palnad heroes Bharat epic stories about the exploits of Pandavas and Lord Krishna and exhortations by local poets, *bhatrajus* and bards and blessings by priests were provided to enliven the tired missionary travellers and to inspire their admirers in and around the villages.

As had been the custom, the honoured guests were provided with provisions: pack-horses or donkeys or bullocks, and also carts, if and when needed More precious than anything else, local volunteers would come forward to accompany them to the next destination for the following two or three days, to convey whatever messages the revolutionary guests desired to send, while they would be resting in their villages for the night or for a day or two, according to circumstances. Those messengers and letter-carriers had to rush along but carefully and avoid being discovered by the enemy and if captured, refused to divluge whatever secrets, by word of mouth or letter or signals or signets that were entrusted to them. So, they had to risk their lives and honour in such missions There were plenty of brave volunteers to perform those arduous duties and many of them had to pay heavy penalties at the brutal hands of the aliens. Many of them joined the Order of Lenkas.

Did Prolaya and Kapaya touch the towns, built in and around the forts held by Muslim chiefs or their Indian associates? Wherever the so-called Indian allies of the local Muslim chiefs were willing to work with Kapaya and sent reliable messages, they must have chosen to accept their

hospitality. But generally, they avoided such close proximity with them, while welcoming their assistance and association, while staying in the nearby *ashram* or temple, if any, or forest hideouts of tribal people. There were some local feudatory nayaks below the fort-kotwals, who wanted to insure themselves with both the forces or those who were secretly in sympathy with the revolutionary forces and they helped Prolaya and Kapaya in many ways, from keeping their movements secret to providing volunteers, food, conveyance and even funds.

Kapaya went on gathering volunteers with their steeds and provisions, as he moved along He galloped from place to place so many times, either to persuade the local chiefs or to send them to other chiefs, to organise sudden or open expeditions by some chiefs against some local recalcitrant chief or chiefs and clearing regionwise the various areas or *seemas* of all enemy forces and their bastions. So he and his associates must have been advising most of the recruits who were rushing to their side to join the forces of the neighbouring nayaks of revolutionary ardour and go on helping them to liberate one after another the forts and *seemas* either by direct attack or by guerilla attacks. Thus Kapaya must have gone on rapidly from one *seema* to another, striking suddenly at some fort and capturing it and bypassing such forts as were heavily fortified and strongly guarded.

It was a guerilla war that he waged. His role was so much like Veera Hanuman, setting on fire people's hearts, rousing the villages, putting heart into the local forces and elements in the enemy's forts and striking terror in the hearts of the alien chiefs and their treacherous Indian allies.

All this could not have been possible always in secrecy. Kapaya's movements must have been reported to the viceroy at Warangal and regional governors. The armed forces as well as the secret agents must have been hard at their heels and attempting to ambush him ; then cut off their supplies or snatching away their messengers, or sowing seeds of discord among his comrades or spreading false rumours of Kapaya's capture

or torture or even death. Many a time, he and his associates had only narrow escapes. Who knows in how many surprise encounters with the enemy forces, what grievious wounds they must have suffered, how many of their comrades were lost. He achieved many a hair-breadth escape. Every day must have witnessed so many soldiers in their camp, which was ever on the move, in great pain from wounds and yet, they had neither doctors nor medicines and they had to depend upon the curative qualities of herbs and their powers of endurance and recuperation.

For months, nay, for years, after they had regained political morale and began to bestir themselves to strike for freedom. Kapaya and his confederates, associates and followers had to live, ride, wade, swim and sleep during their harsh, but heartening marches in their efforts to contact, persuade and fuse into a powerful patriotic force, the 74 heroic nayak leaders among 300 nayaks, their lenkas and their armies.

Prolaya and Kapaya and their contemporary nayaks gained valuable knowledge of the Muslim methods of warfare as well as political moves thanks to their participation in the defensive wars waged by Pratapa Rudra against the Muslim forces of Delhi and the tactics displayed by them during their seizes upon Kakatiya forts and marches through the country. They knew the courage and fanaticism of Delhi forces. They participated in the discussions held officially as well as informally among the nayaks both during the periods of invasions and in the interregnums between such invasions as to why Kakatiya armies met with reverses, why forts were destroyed and captured, how the fort walls of the capital city itself had come to be weakened and destroyed and in what manner, by what temptations, the loyalty of nayaks was weakened by the Muslim rulers. They sought and obtained the support and blessings of the Hindu priests, poets and saints in order to redouble the strength of their armies by the religious fervour and mission of dharma.

As one contemplates that extremely risky, painful and nerve-wrecking mission-so prolonged-that young Kapaya and

wise Prolaya and their lenka comrades and the self-sacrificing priests had undertaken in those distant times (more than 600 years ago), one cannot but admire the resourceful foresight and bravery displayed by the Nayak Confederacy.

We do not have any contemporary accounts of the physical features of the two most prominent nayak leaders of that Dakshinapath revolution. We have only the torsos, heads and warriors on horse-backs, in black granite, as the Kakatiya relics, strewn in the open square of what must have been the courtyard of the temple in Warangal to guide us in imagining how those warriors must have looked like. The study of Telugu literature of Kakatiya age helps us to know to some extent, the cultural approach, statecraft and social ideals which must have guided those warriors. The granite statues of warriors, men and women, mounted on horse-backs that we find chiselled and installed at the Hanumakonda, Ramappa and Warangal temples also helps us to conjure up in our mind's eye the long-limbed stout-hearted and iron-willed nayaks of the Confederation. I fancy the following word-pictures of these two meteoric heroes to help me in my description of the revolutionary movement which is partly historcal and imaginative in other respects. I use historical facts as bricks, contemplative descriptions of social elements and forces as cement and political throughts and moves as foundation for this temple of words to consecrate one of the noblest and most inspiring social revolutionary movements in India's long chequered history.

Prolaya was a tall, strong, broad-shouldered, long-armed and wide-chested Kakatiya warrior. His was a firm mouth with strong jaws and when he smiled, he appeared so handsome. He was fair-skinned. He had lotus-leaf-like eyes with lustre and lure. He had big mustache, at once beautiful and fear-inducing, so black and strong. He had a broad, receding forehead, from which receded his long, thick, dark hair kept in the customary conical knot on top of his head. His netted golden belt held his torso in strength and energy He wore the goldlined silk toga, which was then the customary head-dress of the

princes He carried a number of small swords, spears and anglers, fixed into the warrior's pouch-belt tied above his hips. He was scarcely past the prime of a youthful nayak, though he must have been around 40 years of age at the time of the capture of Pratapa Rudra. He carried many a scar of the wounds received in the battles in which he had participated.

Kapaya was younger. He was equally brave. He possessed an attractive and commanding personality. He was the beloved of the younger sections of nayaks. He was tall with fair skin, bronzed by his marches, strong and straight of mein, quick of intelligence and temper. He too carried the toga on his big head, with its rich-growth of dark hair, tied in a knot. He had long, strong hands and fingers with iron grip on his swords. He was one of the best swordsmen and well known as a pugilist. He distinguished himself as a good warrior, superb commander and wise and dynamic leader of men. He was at once handsome and fearful and induced spontaneous and sacrificial obedience from many a fellow nayak. His lovely eyes glistened, when happy, glowed with fire when angry, and were benign when blessing anyone He was well known for his transparent loyalty to the Kakatiya House and Bharatiya Dharma and his extraordinary wisdom. He was a great leader of men, a powerful disciplinarian and efficient organiser He distinguished himself as an accomplished diplomat and also a guerilla leader with a talisman to help him rush through his enemies' strategems with great ease and skill.

They annointed themselves with turmeric during baths to keep off mosquito bites and with sandalwood paste after bath. Oil massaging and yoga practices maintained their energy.

They wore tight trousers when on horse-back and long, loose silk robes when at home or in a conference. In the customary manner of princes, they wore jewels while at court. They chewed pan-supary and used kasturi and some special mixtures of perfumed condiments along with their betel-leaves to gain an 'elixir' and to assuage pains of fatigue.

Prolaya was a splendid horseman and singularly sure swordsman and skilful leader of men and armies. He obtained the special education that was then customarily given to all scions of noble Kamma families which were so closely associated with the Kakatiya dynasty. That education comprised not only the study of Ramayana, Mahabharata and the ideals of warrior-class and code of conduct to be honoured by all nayaks but also the *Artha Shastra* by Kautilya, *Niti Sara* by Pratapa Rudra Deva, *Panchatantra* by Narayan Bhat, Bhartruhari's *Subhashita* and certainly the Telugu translation of Mahabharata by the renowned minister-cum-saint-cum-poet, Tikkana. He must have studied with great relish the popular treatise called *Sarva Niti Saramu* and *Sumati Satakam* by Baddena Nayak.

Both the uncle and the cousin were passionately devoted to the contemporary Kakatiya and former Chola-Chalukya military standards of heroism. They distinguished themselves as nayaks, lenkas and dynamic organisers They were popular with the priests and princes, the powerful nayaks and the Order of Lenkas. Their own Emperor Pratapa Rudra had himself written a scholarly book on the concepts of statecraft and Prolaya made it his principal guide in the pursuit of his mission.

What could not be contemplated by their contemporary Hindu scholars either in their books or through precedents is that a confederation of princes of more or less equal rank and mutual dependence would be brought into existence with Prolaya undertaking the chief responsibility to lead the revolutionary forces against the Muslim conquerors Prolaya must have found much inspiration and guidance in his endeavours from his careful study of the political strategy and patient, foresighted *dharmic* statemanship of Yudhisthira, so wonderfully delineated in Mahabharatha.

What north Indian Hindu princes failed to do over centuries, those Kisan-based, agriculture-veined, dharmic-minded south Indian nayaks were able to do, that is, to be united among themselves and unite the people and offer organised resistance. Thus they achieved their triumphant revolution.

It was a revolution for national independence and for their cultural and religious freedom and for the fundamental rights of peasants and artisans and autonomy of village panchayats as they were practised at that time.

Once the nayaks decided upon their concerted action and elected Prolaya as their leader, they took stock of their current achievements. They found that most of the forts on the east coast and by the Godavari were already liberated by their nayaks. Kapaya captured all the countryside around Warangal. Bhuvanagiri, Devarakonda, Recherla were more or less under the control of the nayaks of the Recherla family, whether they avowed formal obeisance to Delhi or not. The forts in Rayalaseema, Gandikota, Ganginenikonda and Kanchi in the South could easily be captured. They had only to decide when and how they had to strike for freedom. The nayaks of Hoysala and Kampili regions were ready to declare their independence.

The new dynamism that the Telugu literature gained by the writings of Somanatha, Tikkana and others energised and inspired the lenkas and nayaks. So, the bugles of freedom were sounded almost simultaneously

Rapidly triumph after triumph came their way Warangal was reconquered and occupied by Kapaya and his redoubtable lenkas. Once again the Kakatiya emblem of the Varaha fluttered over Vonti Mitta, the fateful hill by the historic fort.

The brave nayaks of Srisailam, Gandikota, Ganginenikonda recovered their confidence, overcame their internal jealousies and surmounted their chagrins and recriminations and triumphed over their clan-rivalries Somehow they regained their self confidence. They did achieve unity, under the leadership of Krishna Nayak or Krishna Deva and Manivadi Gopi Deva (Nayudu), reputed to be in the vanguard of lenkas as the son and grandson respectively of Pratapa Rudra Deva.

Similarly, the venerable Soma Deva and Tripurari blessed these young nayaks wholeheartedly who brought Rayalaseema forces to reinforce the Warangal front. Thus the eastern and

western dominions were brought into the movement almost simultaneously. Tripurar Mahadeva II and Vinayak Deva, the heroic, adventurous and indomitable son of Kapaya, one of the youngest lenkas, tried to overcome such of those nayaks as were intransigent by the prowess of their armies, when and where their elders' diplomacy failed.

By his astute diplomacy and enthusiastic campaigning and the support of the Brahmins and with the powerful support of the Raya brothers, Kapaya won over Soma Deva of Aravidu and also Veera Ballala III of Karnatak, to the common cause. Once they were assured that the coastal areas were also striking for freedom under the leadership of the famous Prolaya, those feudal princes of Malabar, Dwarasamudram, Bijanagar (Kampili) Aravidu, Raichur, Kurnool, Ganginenikonda, co-operated with Kapaya in rebelling this time in a concerted manner against their Muslim satraps.

IX TRIUMPH OF NAYAK REVOLUTION

Prolaya concentrated his energies in the first instance on the liberation of the whole of the coastal dominions. It was strategically the wisest move against the earth-bound and non-sea-faring Delhi forces, who were more keen on consolidating their power in Telangana, which was then so much more prosperous and better fortified and politically more important. On the other hand, it was much less difficult to attack the forts in the coastal plains and defeat their smaller Muslim garrisons The lake district of Kolanu, the island of Divi and many coastal sand dunes were sparsely populated, less attractive to the foreign troops by their armour of mosquitoes and fevers, and provided for the rebels more easy means of escape and shelter onto the heaving surface of the sea, with the help of the local sea-faring and brave fisher-folk Pallekars, the descendents of the ancient Pallavas. Further, many of the great nayaks of the forts and domains were also his relatives, in the Indian fashion. He was wise to gain the support of the Brahmins who provided the religious justification and publicity, so much needed to keep up the morale of the masses, who had been much harassed and outraged by the fanatical proseletization imposed by the invaders.

He achieved rapid success. The people responded to his call thanks to the power and influence of the teachings of Mahabharata and the Brahmins' preachings that Lord Krishna had given his blessings to Prolaya. In a short time, the whole of the coastal Andhra and land on either side of the Godavari and Krishna shook itself free from the Muslim control. Nayaks of all castes rushed out of their hideouts.

That this movement of national liberation had the support of the masses and that the Muslim governors were made helpless by the universal non-cooperation practised by the people at large, becomes amply evident from the observations of Nuniz of Portugal, on the experiences of the Muslim governor

of Bisnage or Kampili : "Those who had escaped to the mountains with others, who, against their will and through fear, had taken oaths of fealty for their towns and villages, rose against the captain, Malique Neby, and came to besieze him in the fortress, allowing no provisions to go to him, nor paying him the taxes that had been forced on them. And Malique Neby, seeing how little profit he could get in this country and how badly he was obeyed and how far off was the succour sent by his lord, the king, quickly sent a massage to tell him how all the land had risen against him and how everyone was lord of what he pleased and no one was on his side."[1] This was typical of what was happening in one mandalam after another.

Verily, Prolaya became the idol of the masses and his name, message and agents proved to be the heralds of revolts and his war cries sharpened the battle-axes of the people[2]. :

'Vilasa Grant' records : "King Prolaya of the Musunuru family destroyed the oppressive supremacy of the Yavanas by the unrestrained strength of his arm which supported the views of the world. Did his name become a *mantra* to exercise vile Yavanas *(Uccetana-Karma-Kari) ?* Because, by hearing it merely repeated, those despicable Yavanas abandoned the forts and disappeared from every quarter. Just as the people afflicted by summer heat resort to cool waters of a lake, those wbo were harassed by the Yavanas took refuse under that powerful King Prolaya. The very people who were subjected formerly to constant harassment by the *Turushkas,* put them to death; verily, the strength accruing from *asraya* (protection or shelter) is of great consequence. In this way,

1. M. Somosekhara Sarma; op. cit.
2. This victorious and heroic scion of the Kakatiya dynasty came to be hailed as the liberator and saviour of dharma and as being the agent of God to release the people from the unbearable Muslim indignities No wonder, the Andhras have ever since shown their appreciation and devotion to that great leader in the traditional Indian fashion, by calling their sons as Pullayya or Pulla Reddi and their daughters as Pullamma or Poli. A kisan clan of the present-day is known as Poli Nayani Velama.

having overthrown the mighty Yavana rule, Prolaya Nayak revived the *dharma* which was lost during the severe calamity"[3].

The ideological foundations for what had come to be the great war of independence carried on by the Confederacy of 74 Nayaks in a concerted manner were thus laid That was an unique achievement in the annals of India in her struggles against invaders for, in none other era did an alliance and war of independence last so long, nor did a period of freedom last so long.

That the war of liberation meant much for the masses and their religious leaders and that the leaders tried to restore peace and relieve the masses of the unjust taxes imposed by the Muslim rulers was recorded in 'Vilasa Grant' thus: "King Prolaya restored to the Brahmins their *agraharas* which were granted by former kings but forcibly taken away from them by those wrong-doers (Muslims). He made pure the territories of the Andhras which were contaminated with sin as a result of their having been trodden by the *Turushkas*. The farmers gave him with pleasure that portion of the produce of their husbandry declared as due to the king by law, just as the ascetics gave 1/6th of the share of the fruits of their *tapas* Whatever was undone by the *Parasikas* on earth was restored to its former order by that mighty king".

But how about repairing the damaged forts, rebuilding the temples and constructing new forts at all such new places which proved to be specially vulnerable, suitable for enemy action? The nayaks lent their energies to these difficult tasks also.

In this, they obtained the wholehearted co-operation of the masses and their spiritual and social leaders.

Writing on the situation in Karnatak region during the early part of 1327, Sewell says: "Forts were built, armies were raised and the people thoroughly alarmed by the savage

3. M. Somasekhara Sarma, op cit.

inroads made in their country, flocked to the (Harihara, Bukka Kampa and others) standards with such success that further invasions were stayed. It may be due to the fact that the whole mass of Hindus in the Hoysala dominions were roused against him that Mohammad-bin-Tughlak refrained from marching across Mysore against rebellious subjects at Madura.[4] This also indicates what must have happened with much greater success and tempo under the inspiring leadership of Prolaya, Kapaya and the Nayak Confederation of the South.

The Muslim governors of the Delhi Sultan one after another were forced to surrender their forts and eventually the Muslim forces and the viceroy of the Delhi Sultan were driven out of the Telugu country. In that great struggle, the exploits and successes achieved by the sons of Tripurari II in liberating their vast dominions built by their great forefathers, Gangaya Sahini and Ambadeva Maharaja inspired all other nayaks. Their forts of Gaginenikonda, Gandikota and so many other equally important areas fell into their hands in quick succession Anapota Reddi of Kondavidu liberated the mandalams on the east and west of Kondavidu. He also restored the agraharams which had been taken away from them by Muslims during his father's life time. The Delhi Sultan, Ghias-ud-Din, thus had to send his own heir apparent, Takhur-ud-Din Mohammad Janna Khan to quell the rebellion. The Nayak Confederacy defeated him also. Thus for well over four decades that nayak alliance stood firm, kept out the invaders, and assured peace to the people with Brahmin blessings.

Liberation of Karnatak

Ferishta himself describes how Kapaya and Ballala Dev of Karnatak co-operated with each other wholeheartedly to liberate the South from the Delhi Sultan's suzerainty and oppression of the masses.

"Kamba Naik, son of Ladder Dev went privately to Ballala Dev who was the great king of Karnatak and told him

4. M. Somasekhara Sarma, op. cit.

that the Muslims having entered the kingdoms of Tiling and Karnatik desire to extirpate them at one stroke, that the matter deserved serious consideration and that he should take action upon it. Then Ballala Dev, having summoned to his presence all the nobles of his kingdom, asked their advice. After deliberation, it was decided that Ballala Dev should leave the whole of the kingdom behind him and make the frontier fort in the path of the armies of Islam, his residence should take from the possession of the Muslims, Ma' bar, Dharasamand and Kampili, in this year, which was suitable and Kamba Naik should take possession of Telangana from the Court of Delhi and occupy Warangal also"

"Ballala Dev built a city in an inaccessible place among the hills on the frontier in the name of his son, Sujan Ray, which became famous as Bijanagar He sent a large body of cavalry and infantry with Kamba Nayak and the latter took possession of the throne of Warangal.

Afterwards, Ballala Dev and Kamba Naik, having given assistance from both sides to the kings of Dharasamand and Ma' bar, who had been tributaries from ancient times to the King of Carnatik, wrested also those countries from the clutches of Muslims."[5]

The alliance—political and social—between Prolaya and Harihara and his four brothers proved to be of great value. Harihara and Bukka had been governors in the service of Pratapa Rudra. The other brothers, Kampana, Marapa and Muddapa were governors at one time or other in Bijapur, Araga, Mulbagal of the Karnatak. They gained valuable experience in the politics of Kampili, Hoysala and Kakatiya kingdoms. Veera Ballala, who was also related to Prolaya, trusted them It was because of the military significance of this alliance that by 1330 the "Muslim armies retired (to

5. Kamba Naik stands for Kapaya Nayak, Dharasamand for Dwarasamudram, Bijanagar for Vijayanagar, Ma'bar for Malabar, Sujan Ray for Harihara Raya, Carnatik for Kakatiya empire.

Madura) and paid little attention to the condition of the Mysore country, while they left a Muslim governor in Madura."[6]

Kapaya made common cause with Hoysalas and their heroic and sage King Veera Ballala III and drove away the Muslims from Karnataka. Then they liberated Kanchi and Tondamandalam and installed Venrumkondan Sambavarayan on the Gaddi. Prolaya's great ally Chalukya Somadeva, the progenitor of the later Aravidu dynasty of Vijayanagar, defeated Malik Mohammad and captured Kampili and freed the northern Karnatak from Muslim imperialsm. He was also able to help Tirupurari II to liberate Cuddapah, Kurnool and Bellary areas by capturing Gangineni konda, the citadel founded by Gangaya, Satanikota and even Anegondi. In these battles, many a comrade of Prolaya, such as Komati Vema Reddi, Tripurari Mahadeva II took part.

Prolaya tried to fashion himself after the example of noble Dharmaja, judging from his success in gaining the approbation of all his fellow nayaks and achieving the presidency over their Confederation. Ordinarily, such nayaks were competitive and precautious and individually ambitious and would not easily subordinate themselves to any other of their social cadre for more than the duration of a battle or two. The fact that they had voluntarily hailed Prolaya as their chief during the revolution indicates how Prolaya must have grown head and shoulders above everyone else as a warrior, diplomat and patriot and acclaimed as the most deserving and inspiring proto-type of epic Dharmaja.

The Confederation of Nayaks, under the leadership of Prolaya in the first instance and later under Kapaya, functioned effectively as an united front against the Delhi sultans and their agents and the Sultan of Gulbarga. It seems to have allowed more local autonomy than was usually enjoyed by the contemporary feudal chiefs and to have imposed much less central suzerainty or supremacy than was customary.

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6. Swell op. cit, p. 184–85.

Some of the nayaks felt free to indulge in local hostilities against each other. Nevertheless, the Confederation functioned as their united front against Delhi and Bahmini sultans.

Prolaya Nayak continued to rule from his own capital, Rekapalle, even after becoming the chief of the Confederation. He respected his nephew's control over Warangal. He thereby demonstrated that he was not at all ambitious to become the imperial overlord of the Nayaks' Confederation and was content to be their leader. Though Kapaya Nayak succeeded in capturing Warangal, the beloved and prestigious Kakatiya capital, and forcing the Delhi's viceroy to flee from Andhra, he was ever ready to strengthen and hail the overlordship of Prolaya. He worked loyally as the mahamandaleswara and mahamantri of the Nayak Confederation, so long as Prolaya lived.

After Prolaya's death, Kapaya came into his heritage. He was accepted as the chief of the Nayak Confederation. He assumed the title of *Andhradesadhiswara*. We also learn from Pillalamarri inscription that his feudatories and fellow nayaks took pride in recounting that he was the *Puravareswara* of Hanumakonda, *Choda Rajya Sthapanacharya* and *Kanchi Raksha Palaka*, thereby indicating that he not only continued to be powerful and popular till 1357 but also that he and the Confederation maintained their firm influence over the Tamil region of Cholas These facts were attested by Erapotu Lamkam Garu, son of Machinayanim Garu and Rudrasani and governor of Pillalamarri. From the Pillalamarri inscription, we also learn that till 1357 the country and nayaks were still keen on and busy with repairing the damage done to temples and Hindus by Bahmani sultans. Thus one of the original revolutionary objectives of Nayak Confederation continued to inspire the people in their loyalty to Kapaya's leadership. Erapotu Lamkam Garu installed Lord Shiva's idol in the Pillalamarri temple, whose original *lingam* was destroyed by Ala-ud-Din of Gulbarga during his invasion of Andhra.

It was through their extraordinary statesmanship, diplomatic excellence and patriotic spirit of forbearance towards their fellow-chieftains, who were impatiently claiming to be kings in their own right and who were chafing under their overall leadership that these leaders of the Confederation succeeded in maintaining the Dakshinapath's united front and thereby ensured its independence for nearly 40 years.

Prolaya and even more so, Kapaya maintained their most beneficial and essential alliances with the rulers of Vijayanagar and Hoysala, who were acknowledged as kings in their own right and were only allies and not at all members of the Confederacy. This was remarkable in view of the fact that some of the members of the Confederacy were trying to wage war with them and to nibble at their dominions. At times, Harihara and Bukka had to war against Kondavidu to keep the nayaks under control. Once he was obliged to annex lower Pennar valley and also Nellore dominions. In spite of all this, Kapaya was able to gain the support of Harihara; later of Bukka, whenever he and his son Vinayak Dev had to fight against the Bahmani sultans and they offered equally sincere support to Vijayanagar forces, when they were at war with the Sultan. Thus, Warangal nayaks protected the independence of the whole of Andhra despite its internal disunity and traditional mutual rivalry—so weakening—between so many members of the Confederacy. The post-Pratapa Rudra wars waged by Kakatiya nayaks were distinguished from those earlier wars of resistance carried on by Pratapa Rudra by the fact that they were hailed in the name of the Andhra *Desa* (country) and not merely in that of the Kakatiya dynasty and Mother Kakati. This symbolised an important change that came over the public opinion in the Andhra *Desa* which comprised almost the whole of what is known as Andhra Pradesh.

During those trying and turbulent years, the people of Andhra, who were Telugu-speaking came to be woven into a powerful political entity. They enjoyed cultural unity, brought about by the development of Kakatiya dominion, embracing all the regions of Telugu speaking people from

Kalinga to Kanchi, from Srikakulam of Andhra Vishnu at the mouth of river Krishna, to Srisailam. To the West, there was the Hoysala and Kampili and to the North, the Devagiri, Maharashtra. It was also given an emotional dynamism by their common literature, in classical metric form, highly developed poetry of epic stature, popular songs ballads in *dwipada* and prose compositions in very high, disciplined and chaste quality and dynamic modes of expressions of peoples' emotions and diplomatic and state-level expertness.

X. THE CITY OF WARANGAL

From the descriptions given by the contemporaneous Telugu poets, we learn that in Warangal many rich merchants lived ; they traded in the ten precious stones, jewels, foreign goods of great value and maintained many caravans of bullocks to convey their goods of trade. The nayaks, businessmen and other rich people lived in multi-storied mansions and moved about on horse-backs, carriages drawn by horses and were also conveyed on palanquins. *Mushaeras* were frequently held to display the talents of poets, singers, etc. There were separate streets for what might be compared to the present-day clubs, where beautiful damsels and talented courtiers displayed their graces. Judging from the magnificent remnants of the place, its portico, the cisterns for fountains, the foundations of what must have been vast gardens with shady trees with bowers, flower-beds, etc., that we find in Bijapur—once capital of the Bahmani sultans — which must have been built within a century after the fall of Devagiri and Warangal, we can imagine how glorious and glamourous must have been the splendour and development of that Kakatiya capital city. If the height and might of the black-granite pillars of that once-gigantically high-roofed darbar hall, a portion of which alone is found still standing in Bijapur is an indication of the noble cities of Devagiri and Warangal, then the darbar halls, their canopies, ceilings, gallaries, etc. must have been as artistic and majestic as the best in the world of those centuries.

As for poor people, they lived in thatched houses sometimes with mud walls or dried mud-brick walls. They used earthen pots and vessels. They slept on simple cots; wore cotton dhoties, upper clothes, saries and blouses. They were paid in kind, usually in terms of corn and simple cookies. They lived more or less in the same indigent and simple manner as that of the present-day masses.

The following pen-picture of Harijan (Pulaiyar) quarters, drawn by ancient Tamil Writer Sekkitar in his life of Nandanār and quoted by Prof. K. Nilakanta Sastry in his monumental history of 'The Colas', on pp. 568-569, as it obtained in the eleventh-twelfth centuries of Tamilnad is not much different from the life in the Harijan quarters of even this twentieth century. Life of Harijans in Telengana's Warangal must have been very much like this; so putrifyingly stagnant has been the plight of our Harijans over this millenium, despite the reform activities of Ramanuja, Basava, Mahatma Gandhi.

"In the outskirts of Ādanūr (a wealthy city of ancient fame in Tamilnad) was a small hamlet of Pulaiyas, studded with small huts under old thatches overspread by *surai* creepers and inhabited by agrarian labourers engaged in menial occupations. In the thresholds of the huts covered with strips of leather, little chickens were seen moving about in groups; dark children who wore bracelets of iron were prancing about, carrying little puppies whose yelps were drowned by the tinkling bells which girdled their waists. In the shade of the *marudu* trees, a female labourer *(Ulatti)* sent her baby to sleep on a sheet of leather; there were mango trees from whose barnches drums were hanging; and under the cocoanut palms, in little hollows on the ground, tiny-headed bitches lay quiet after pupping. The red-crested cocks crowed before dawn, calling the brawny *pulaiyar* to their day's work; and by day, under the wide shade of the *Kanji* tree, spread the voice of the wavy-haired Pulaiya women singing as they were husking paddy. By the side of tanks full of warbling birds, the music of many instruments accompanied the drinking *fetes* of Pulaiya women who wore on their heads fragrant flowers and ears of paddy-corn, and who staggered in their dance as the result of increasing intoxication. In this abode of the people of the lowest caste, there arose a man with a feeling of true devotion to the feet of Siva. He was the unrivalled Nandanār".

Even Ulugh Khan observed in 1321 from the height of the earthen mound built outside the Warangal fort that there

were fountains within the city for about two miles and that all along them there were flower-beds containing Indian flowers such as champaka, mogali, jasmines. The city was divided into so many *petas* (localities) in each of which people of a particular profession lived. There were also Velipalem (suburb) hotels and many temples and market places.

The life of the masses was not very pleasant or free from biting penury. So many Brahmins, who certainly were given the best of what was available in that society. also tasted poverty. For instance, poet Srinatha complained that his poor hosts in Karnatak and Rayalaseema areas could not get rice, had to make almost all their dishes out of hard corn and could get only butter-milk instead of curds and tasteless dishes. He found that even dancing girls were rough, rude and wore coarse clothes and ate non-appetising dishes.

Though there was forced labour, those workers were given free meals comprising cooked corn, chutney and curry as the principal items. Such forced labour was usually commandered for the construction of public utilities such as roads, tanks, road-side water supply centres, choultries, temples and schools. Women worked hard in domestic chores and kept themselves busy in spinning during their leisure time. They carried water over long distances from the deep pools, which were mostly step-wells.

There were carnivals during festivals for all classes of people to enable them to enjoy simple pleasures in a cosmopolitan manner. Periodically dramas and pantomimes were organised in open-air theatres and all people were free to attend and enjoy. Pandits and poets frequently held debates to display their literary and religious ideas and compositions. The people of Warangal held the palm of honour in all the social achievements and displays of those times.

The Warangal fort is said to have been built by Rudradeva, the son and successor of Prola of Kakatiya. Its earthen fort wall was built with such gummy, rammed and impenetrable lumps of seasoned earth mixed with cow-dung and

strengthened by myrabolin water and molasses and jaggery that even iron spears could not pierce and snatch at least handfulls of its surface. The burning iron-balls hurled at it at high speed by the catapults of the Muslim forces of Delhi could not make any dent. Ganapati Deva shifted the Kakatiya capital from Hanumakonda to Warangal between 1252–1254. Maremanda Rama Rao gives the following account of Warangal.[1]

"A Telugu literary work, named *Kridabhiraman* gives an interesting description of the city as it was in the early 14th century. It describes the sojourn of two friends, a Brahman and a Vaisya, from sun-rise to sun-set in the city. The friends first entered the Velipalem and then moved on to Medarivada and saw a Medari woman and a woman of the untouchable caste. They next went to the Melasanta and the Halikavati in the middle of Velipalem. Here, they saw several people belonging to the lower classes and a group of gamblers. Then they went to the Moharivada and proceeding north, came across the deep moat. Next, they passed through the entrance in the stone wall. Avoiding the main highway which was crowded with traffic, they took a side road and walked on. They saw the Virulagudi or the temple of the heroes, the shrine of Ekavira."

"From here could be seen the temples of Kesava Swayambhu glittering in the sunlight. They reached a Bhairava temple by noon and heard 16 strokes struck in the royal palace. They ate in a hotel in the Brahmanavada and rested for a while. Next they entered the Vesyavatika or the quarters of the dancing girls and met Macaldevi, the famous courtesan of the court of King Kakatiya Pratapa Rudradeva. After visiting the houses of some public women, they witnessed snake play, ram fighting and cock fighting. Ultimately, they reached the houses of their ladies love."

"It is possible to identify some of the places mentioned in the *Kridabhiramam* and locate them in the modern fortress

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1. Maremanda Rama Rao, "Select Kakatiya Temples", p. 27-29.

of Warangal. The fort consists of a wide mud wall, known as the *matti kota*, with an opening in each of the four cardinal directions. There is a well-fortified entrance in the west and a winding path through it leading into the interior. About two furlongs away is another enclosing wall built of huge blocks of stone, known as the *rati kota*. There is a stepped gallery on the inner side of this wall. The stone wall too has four entrances and zig-zag pathway going through each of them. To the south-west of the path are two small shrines known as the *Erlal gudi* or *Virula gudi* and the *Medarayan gudi*. To the north of the pathway are the shrines of Virabhadra and another small shrine. Further down the road is a wide enclosure, all to the north of the edges of which the foundations of a brick wall can be seen. This brick enclosure contained another, known as the *kanchu kota* (bronze wall) and inside the latter was situated the royal palace. Further down, the road takes a short bend to the south. To the west of this bend is a later structure known as the *kushimahal* and to its east is a wide area marked by four finely carved toranas one in each cardinal direction".

"It is certain that the two friends entered the fort through the western gateway in the mud wall. The area between this wall and the stone wall inside it was known as the *bahya katakamu* or the outer fort and contained the *Melasanta*, or the place where the fair was held, the *Halikavati* or the quarters of the agriculturists. In this area were also included Moharivada and Velipalem. Inside the second enclosure or the *rati kota* was the temple of the heroes identical with *Erlal gudi* mentioned above." "In the southern part round about the *Nelasambhu gudi* mentioned above, must have been located the *Brahmanavada* and the *Vesyavatika*".

In their markets, there used to be displayed cocoanuts, mangoes, camphor, sandal, musk, other spices, ivory, silks, pearls, turmeric, sugar and jaggery, salt, ghee, oils, pepper, tin, lead, rice, corn, grams, wheat, oilseeds, tamarind, onions, ginger, vegetables, betel leaves and many foreign articles, which were then being imported from the prosperous ports of Motupalli and Machilipatnam. Dolls, dressing mirrors of

six feet high, cosmetics, silver and gold jewellery of domestic and foreign designs with precious stones, were in great demand.

In his *Kridabhiramam* poet Vallabharayalu said that in front of the palace of Macaldevi, the courtesan of Pratapa Rudra, 'sandal water was sprinkled to keep down dust, the aromatic kesari from Kashmir was used to provide floor decorations and tender leaves were used for the festoons for the doorways" On the walls, pictures depicting the life of Krishna and Gopis, Shiva and Parvati, Chandra and his Tara, Menaka and her Viswamitra were painted. Such was the artistic luxury enjoyed by the elite of those times. There were more than 1,500 prosperous painters' houses. Young couples, courtesans used to get their life-like paintings made for pleasure. Lenkas used to get painted the portraits of their heroes and displayed them in processions during festivals.

There were shops to display and sell fine varieties of cloth woven by handloom weavers. Marco Polo testified to their excellence in thinness, borders, prints, designs. Different types of silk were utilised, laces in gold and silver were interwoven and borders containing many intricate designs were inlaid with different coloured yarns, laces. Different types of clothes with materials brought from Kashmir, Varanasi and even from China were being produced by the handloom weavers in the Kakatiya empire. Their products were being exported outside India and were highly valued for their beauty, thinness and workmanship.

Carpet manufacture was specially developed by one set of weavers of that city. That industry was so much valued by Muslims that they forcibly converted the master-weavers, and so, to this day, this manufacture has remained almost a Muslim monopoly. Similarly, the manufacture of arms and swords was developed in Warangal and Nirmal and their products used to be exported to such distant places as Damascus. Nirmal works are so famous as decorative pieces.

The carpenters and basket-weavers (Medaras) of Warangal were famous for their work on different types of wood and timber.

There were hundreds of high class hotels which were kept open day and night.

There used to be a census of families of people engaged in different professions, living in the Warangal city. Ekambranath, who wrote the history of Pratapa Rudra, a couple of centuries after the fall of that city to the Muslims, gave the following information: Brahmin houses, 13,000; Kakatiyas, 2,000; Business people, 30,000; Millionaires, 420; Yadavas or shepherds, 4,000; Hotel-keepers, 400.

There were potters, weavers, toddy-tappers, basket-weavers, tailors and many types of other artisans and workmen. In addition to the above, there were several lakhs of defence forces, quartered in and around the fort. To supply the foodgrains, arms and ammunition, there must have been a chain of towns and markets within the surrounding district and the commerce and trade that prevailed must have provided employment for lakhs of people.

Gribble described the prosperity and glory of the Yadava capital Devagiri thus: "Deccan, under Ramachandra of Yadavas was prosperous. The main streets of Devagiri and other important towns and cities were lined with the shops of goldsmiths, dealers in pearls and fine and costly muslin. There were many wealthy householders and there was a great demand for such artists, since rich men sought eagerly for ornaments". "Ornaments and bullion were often buried underground in the houses of more opulent. These lived in three-storeyed houses with good windows and doors, painted with pictures on the outer sides and having guards stationed at the entrance. Cooks, umbrella-bearers, betel-carriers were some of the servants. Palanquin was the fashionable conveyance of the rich. Horse carriages were not in use.[2]

2. J.D.B. Gribble, "History of the Deccan",

The conditions in the richer Warangal must have been akin to what prevailed in Devagiri.

It was with the definite purpose of robbing it of its attractions and importance—civic, military and historical—that the successive sultans of Delhi made sedulous efforts to destroy it and raze to the ground its buildings, palaces and military structures and religious edifices.

What must have been the fate of that brilliant and prosperous city of Warangal, after its fall into the hands of the Sultans of Gulbarga! The 20th century has witnessed the horrible scorched-earth programme of the Nazis. The sixteenth century experienced the following fate of the great city of Vijayanagar weeks after the confederate and conquering Deccan Sultans defeated the Rayas in the Talikota War of 1565 Here is the description of that destruction by Robert Sewell :

Those Moslem vandals "lit huge fires in the magnificently decorated buildings forming the temple and smashed its exquisite stone sculptures. With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after day their work of destruction Never has such a havoc been wrought and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors beggaring description".

Another writer, a muslim, wrote: "the victors captured jewels, ornaments, furniture, camels, tents. campequipage, drums, standards, maidservants, menservants, and arms and armour of all sorts in such quantity that the whole army was enriched". Yet another writer Ferishta reported, "the plunder was so great that every private man in the allied army became rich in gold, jewels, tents, arms, horses and slaves".

Even if the defeated city of Warangal had been treated half as harshly as Vijayanagar, the nursery and sufferings of the fallen people must have been horrible and savage.

The terrible state in which the city's ruins were found at the end of the 19th century, was recorded by Gribble thus: "The outer wall is built entirely of mud. It is very high and encloses an area of about two and a half square miles. The inner wall is of stone and encloses an area of about one square mile. Almost the only views are four beautifully carved porches in the centre of inner enclosure. They are placed at the four cardinal points and probably formed the entrance to the palace. Close by is a large hall, possibly used as a treasure house. It is massively built in the shape of an arc. There is a temple. It is one of the most perfect specimens of Chalukyan architecture in South India. Massive pillars of black granite, polished like marble, are carved into all manner of shapes with masterly skill. The shrines are protected by screens of the most delicate stone tracery and the whole temple or what remains of it is a perfect gem of its kind."[3]

The glory of that glamourous city of Warangal was so great, its place in the political and social matrix of the Andhras was so noble that successive efforts were made by nayaks of later ages and Kalinga invaders from Orissa to recapture and restore it to its ancient national importance. For instance, Veerabhadra Raghudeva Narendra, son of Parasurama, brother of Pratapa Kapileswara Gajapati, the lord of Utkala, at the command of Purushothama (1470–94) captured Warangal from Gulbarga Sultan. In this campaign, Lachideva Kumara Mahapatra, son of the king played a notable role.

In the course of that campaign, Kumara Mahapatra captured the fort of Gandikota also.

Again in 1503, Sitapati Raju alias Shitab Khan of the Bhogi family, son of Madaya Nayak, grandson of Naga, captured the city of Warangal and according to his inscription of

3. J.D.B. Gribble, op. cit.

1504, in Warangal, he reinstalled Panchalaraya Krishna and the goddess of Kakati, removed by the Muslims and worshipped Swayambhudeva, the tutelory deity of the Kakatiyas'.[4] He achieved these triumphs with the active support of the Gajapatis of Orissa, especially Hamvira, son of Kapileswara Gajapati of Kapilendra dynasty, who gained overall control of Telangana between 1466-1500. It was during this happy period of Warangal and its recapture of some of its earlier glory, Ekambranath, the Telugu scholar wrote his famous book, *The History of Pratapa Rudra*, in Telugu Prose.[5]

It can thus be seen that the spell of this historic city continued to call the nayaks of Andhra and Kalinga for more than 150 years after the fall of the Nayaks' Confederation and the death of Kapaya, to make repeated efforts to dislodge the sultans and free it fron the Muslim control.

4. Maremanda Rama Rao, op. cit.
5. Ekambranath, "Pratapa Rudra Charitram."

XI. TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF NAYAK LEADERSHIP

(1330—1370)

Prolaya lived for about 10 years after defeating the imperialists and forcing their governors and commanders of forts to withdraw from most parts of Dakshinapath He installed Kapaya in Warangal and his son, Vinayak Dev at Kaulas, the strategically important fort, nearest to Devagiri. He was content to rule from his own capital, Rekapalle. He was not fascinated by the ill-fated Warangal and wished it to be protected by the younger nayaks and lenkas He busied himself with healing the wounds caused to the social life of Andhras by the battles, which were inflicted upon them during the three decades of wars with Muslim imperialists from Delhi. He helped the people to rebuild their temples, rehabilitate their villages, reconstruct their irrigation works, repair the roads, choultries (inns) and educational institutions He kept all the nayak clans in peace with one another and also encouraged them to work in harmony with the confederation. He tried his best to encourage the newly emergent Reddis and Boyas to achieve social as well as political equality with the long-established nayaks of Durjaya, i.e , Recherla, Kolanu, Kayastha, Chola and Racha Houses, without exciting too much of their jealousy. Thus he respected the Nayak Anapota Reddi in Addanki Cheraku (Cherukuri villages and Cherukuneni Kammas commemorate those Nayaks) chiefs in Kurnool. Similarly, he assured the Recherla nayaks that their friendship and social status were specially valued by confirming them in the extremely important nayankarams of Bhuvanagiri, Devarakonda, Recherla, which were so close to and militarily as important as Warangal. He strengthened the foundations which had already been laid by his alliance through marriages, the political aliances with Hoysala, Vijayanagar, Kayastha, Chola, Nellore, Kolanu and other nayaks of the forts all along the rivers of Tungabhadra, Penna, Krishna, Godavari. He achieved a stable and unique political system

in the whole of Dakshinapath, based upon equality and mutual respect for each others' territorial integrity among all the ruling families and their nayaks.

He made many a gift to temples and learned men. He erected so many pillars of triumph and left many inscriptions[1].

Prolaya did not live long to see the consolidation of the gains he achieved for the Nayaks' Confederation. He died rather suddenly, on the battle-field, so the popular ballads say, while engaged in a defensive war with the Orissa Gajapatis. But he left an excellent legacy to Kapaya; an united Andhra, with friendly neighbouring kingdoms on all sides in Dakshinapath; with only the North exposed to the danger of invasions from the imperialist Muslim forces.

Kapaya succeeded Prolaya to the leadership of the Nayak Confederacy. He deserved it by his supreme contributions to its formation and gaining allies from Karnatak and by his diplomatic and military exploits. He was hailed by the lenkas, the youthful nayak warriors, as the bravest leader. Besides, Mummadi Nayak and his sons, Kolani Rudra Deva, the grandson of Sama, once a minister of Ganapati Deva and the Brahmin nayaks of Kolanu continued to support him. He was the beloved of the masses.

It was in the fitness of that revolutionary career of Andhra, that Kapaya, who so nobly yielded the primacy of leadership of the Confederation to Prolaya, should have captured the principal prize of that revolution, viz., Warangal. To be the master of that famous fort of Warangal was to achieve a place in history and it was thus the Muslim historian came to mention only him as the successful leader of that revolution. Kapaya was, however, very rightly mindful of the comparatively greater importance of his colleagues and

1. One of them, known as 'Vilasa Grant' has come to be discovered and deciphered for us by the late Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma. That grant was made in 1330 which means that the first phase of liberation of Dakshinapath was over by 1330.

historic significance of the achievements of Raya brothers and Vidyaranya on the West, the noble leadership of Veera Ballala and comradeship of Chola and Pandya nayaks in the South.

He ensured that only Prolaya's inscriptions were issued. But he could not resist the pressure of the lenkas and his own nayak followers to invest him with too many attributes of royalty. He did his best to avoid the assumption of kingship, even after the death of Prolaya and the fulfilment of the plans for the reconstruction of all the military forts and outposts, even though many of his contemporary nayaks like Prolaya Vema of Addanki and his successors donned the crown of kings.

His son Vinayak assumed the title of the Kakatiya rulers and became Vinayak Dev. He was certainly a powerful, dynamic prince. He was a great asset to his father and the Confederacy, in their fight against Bahmani Sultan's forces. He was a ferocious opponent of Islamic imperialism and was bent upon resisting the threat held by the Bahmani forces to the integrity of Warangal and Andhra He excited the envy and jealousy of other nayaks. Was he sure of the loyalty of the young princes ?

Kapaya assumed the overlordship of Dakshinapath for the avowed purpose of safeguarding the Bharatiya dharma as against the Delhi imperialism with all its contempt and hatred against Indian culture and Hindu standards of life He restored the *inams* to Brahmins, renovated the temples. He was acclaimed as the unquestioned and unrivalled leader of all the Andhra nayaks, His followers were not as wise as himself; the Brahmin nayaks and priests were equally imprudent in their enthusiasm for his leadership and so, Kapaya was loaded with all the hereditary titles of Kakatiyas, many of which had come down from Cholas of the South and Chalukyas of the West, Purohits embellished the chain of all those titles with so much of hyperbole and intoxicating vanity in their songs and slokas hailing Kapaya's leadership. All that proved to be an annoyance to so many old nayaks who were war-veterans. And that sowed the seeds of discord and envy

because many nayaks, including those of Recherla House who were so ambitious and envious.

Prolaya was chary about such titles. He was keenly conscious of the limitations of his powers over his fellow nayaks. But by the time Kapaya became the *Adhyaksha*, power had gone to the heads of the nayaks so closely associated with Warangal. Kapaya himself became more a ruler than a leader and took power over his fellow nayaks so much for granted He could not restrain his enthusiastic lenka phalanxes from misusing power. The contemporary atmosphere was so much in favour of a mahamandaleswara, assuming all the regal powers, prestige, displaying it by holding darbars with poets in the epic fashion that even Kapaya, with all his statesmanship and scholarship in Hindu epic lore could not progress towards egalitarian *Adhyaksha* of the fellow nayaks. Just about that time, the Turkish saidars of Delhi stationed at Devagiri were electing one of them as their Sultan, not merely as *Adhyaksha*; he was Ala-ud-Din of Bahmani. That too must have had a bad influence on the lenkas.

Devagiri, which had been the Yadava capital, fell into the hands of some chiefs who rebelled againt Delhi Sultan. Some of them must have been new converts from among the erstwhile Yadava nayaks. Most of them came from Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia, Turkey, Central Asia and even Abyssinia and other parts of Africa. They were all adventurers, out to gain war booty. They took advantage of court conflicts in Delhi and declared themselves independent. They then proceeded to elect one among them as their chief. He was the Bahmani Sultan, Ala-ud-Din. They were jealous of the resurgence of the Andhra and Karnatak nayaks and resented the rise of Kapaya to supremacy among the nayaks. They began to cast covetous eyes on Warangal.

As irony of fate would have it, within the first decade of his ascension of the famous *Takhat* of Kakatiyas, Kapaya was forced to make a choice between the Sultan of Delhi with constant threat of invasion on one side and the centurian Turks of Devagiri who rebelled against Sultan Mohammed-

bin-Tughlak. He had also to deal with the power-mad, self-confident, war-mongering local feudatory nayaks who held sway over their domains and who were ever on the look out to encroach on their neighbour's domains.

So much depended also upon the political strategy of the overlord to assure himself of the steady support of a strong enough group of nayaks and overawe the others who might possibly be inclined to feel distant or different in their social attachments from the overlord. It was because of these ebulliant, ever-recurrent and tempestuous ambitions that Ganapati Deva, Rudrama Devi, Pratapa Rudra tried to assure themselves of the support of as many great nayaks as possible through marriage alliances. In the same way, Prolaya and Kapaya also busied themselves with weaving a network of family relations with a large number of nayaks. They had all fought together under the leadership of Kakatiyas and later they learnt to love and co-operate with each other for the recapture of power from the alien Muslim rulers to regain their own feudal domains under the inspiring leadership of Prolaya and Kapaya.

There were yet many other princes or nayaks who were outside that charmed circle, who also fought against the Turks, Arabs, Persians and other Muslim forces from Delhi, who took part in that general revolt against Delhi's governors and regained their forts. Though they accepted for the time being the supreme leadership of Prolaya and his successor Kapaya, they were not attached to them with as great affection and sense of loyalty as the others who were bound by marriage as well as clan traditions.

These nayaks were waiting for their chance of rebelling against Kapaya or any of his adherents and thus aggrandise themselves in the traditional, though suicidal manner. It became, therefore, the constant endeavour of Kapaya, once he became the overlord and was accepted as the *Andhra Suratrana* or Sultan, to be ready to take to arms and march against any nayak who might show signs of rebellion. It so happened that the nayaks of Recherla and Bhuvanagiri led by Singaya Nayak and his sons began to strengthen their forts and build new

ones, independently of the advice of Kapaya and warring against the Reddi of Addanki and Kota. So, Kapaya had to march against them and force them to accept his advice and decision. This led to internal schism and weakening of the united front of the Nayak Confederacy.

Simultaneously with this recrudescence of the traditional weakness of feudal and Indian political life, the Sultan of Delhi was facing similar trouble with his generals. His Turkish generals who were sent to govern his provinces of Gujarat, Devagiri, Bengal also were trying to rebel against Delhi and carve out for themselves independent kingdoms.

Kapaya thought though unwisely that since any how the Hindu kingdoms of the South had to reconcile themselves to co-exist with Muslim rulers of the North, it would be best if, like the Hindu nayaks, the Muslim generals also rival with each other, carve out separate kingdoms and thus neutralise their mutually antagonistic forces so that their threat to Hindu kingdoms would be minimised. So, he encouraged the revolts of centurian Turkish generals at Devagiri. He went to their rescue repeatedly, whenever they were fighting against the forces of Delhi. Eventually, he had the satisfaction of contributing to their triumph and the emergence of their separate kingdom of Bahmani. It was natural for him to have hoped for good neighbourliness at least out of gratitude from the newly crowned Sultan, Ala-ud-Din of Devagiri.

This meant an important and qualitative change in the war aims of Andhra. Nayaks' (Kapaya's) support to the leader of Bahmani sardars was disliked by some of the Hindu priests and religious leaders. During the earlier wars and battles fought by Prolaya and the Nayak Confederacy, people were asked to co-operate with the nayaks in order to protect Hindu religion, Bharatiya dharma and to regain the lost national freedom. Kapaya could only invoke in his support of the Muslim sardars of Devagiri, the territorial ambitions of independence of nayaks and at best, Andhra loyalties. He could not appeal for support in the name of the faith in and passion for Hinduism or dharma, because it was a fight between two rival

Muslim powers. He was seen as supporting one Muslim power against another. Thus he could not command such universal support and unassailable loyalty from all nayaks and peoples as Prolaya did during the earlier war, which was truly a national revolutionary war. When Kapaya wanted, on a later occasion, to take cudgels against the nayaks of Recherla, Bhuvanagiri and Devarakonda for supporting Bahmani, it became possible for them to argue that they had not taken a vow to support one Muslim power against another and if it pleased Kapaya to support Bahmani ruler, on one occasion, how could it be a sin for them to support the same Bahmani ruler on another occasion ?

Kapaya felt he had no choice; he had to try to make peace with the contemporary realities that the Muslim rulers either of Delhi or of Devagiri were not prepared to honour treaties of non-aggression and non-interference for any length of time. He knew that it was impossible for him to persuade or force either Delhi or Bahmani rulers to agree to honour Warangal's territorial integrity On the other hand, the rulers of those times were always ready to invade neighbouring states without any cause or provocation and without a second thought about any social or political obligations. All that they minded was their estimate of relative strength of their neighbours and suitability of the time or astrological readings. That was the reason for his decision to try to reach some standstill agreements on mutual non-aggression basis with the sultans of Devagiri and Delhi, without too much stress on the religious differences or antagonisms, while at the same time, scrupulously honouring such agreements as well as maintaining mutual religious co-operation with all the other Hindu kings of Dakshinapath.

Singaya, his sons and associates began to induce the Bahmani ruler to try to interfere in the affairs of the Hindu kingdom. Ala-ud-Din, the Bahmani Sultan, was very eager to oblige. While appearing to be pleasing Kapaya, he dismissed all civilised considerations of gratitude and good-neighbourliness and invaded the Andhra and thus encouraged Singaya and others to defy the supremacy of Kapaya.

Kapaya did not expect that the Turkish centurians led by their king Ala-ud-Din would turn against him ungratefully, so soon after they had been helped to overcome the Delhi Sultan's forces, intrigue with some of his confederates and invade his territories. The unexpected happened. Telangana was invaded in 1350 and his forces were overcome, the Godavari was crossed and his own vaunted capital Warangal was besiezed. Thus he was humbled, all so cruelly. He and his nayak allies swallowed their pride and disappointment and concluded a treaty with Bahmani Sultan and agreed to pay tribute.

How could Kapaya allow the Andhra independence to be destroyed by the Sultan ? Astute and dynamic that he was, he began to rally the Vijayanagar and Hoysala princes and his own nayaks who were still loyal to him. They all realised the need for reinforcing their united front.

They learnt the good lesson from that discomfiture, that they should try and achieve internal unity within Andhra. Hence their police actions against Recherla, Bhuvanagiri nayaks who had sided with Bahmani Ala-ud-Din either openly or secretly. But Kapaya's resources were depleted, his army became weakened and people grew so much more war-weary what with the series of those wars over the prolonged period of 30 years.

Mohammad Shah of Bahmani suspected that the Rayas and Kapaya might invoke the intervention of Delhi Sultan to control the depredations of sardars because of their realisation, from their bitter experience that a Delhi Sultan at the distance of 2½ months army's journey, would be less of a nuisance than the Sultan of nearby Devagiri and Gulbarga.

So he sent in advance a number of his officers with scouts to devaste "the country of the infidels whilst he followed in rear of them. For nearly two years, he travelled through the country of Telangana and having taken possession of the district of Bhongir, he overthrew the idol-temples and instead of them, built mosques and public schools."

His forces besiezed Warrangal. We can but imagine the sufferings caused by that cruel Sultan and his armies. So, Kapaya had no other go than to accept defeat and cede Kaulas, the great fortress (in 1358-59) and pay a large subsidy.

Kapaya had to bear another crushing tragedy. Veera Ballala of Hoysala hearkened to the cry, even when he was past 80 years of age, of the oppressed people of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, for liberation from the Muslim rulers at Madura and Cannanore, just as he had done so many years earlier when Prolaya and Kapaya sought his alliance to liberate Dakshinapath from Delhi imperialists. Ballala laid siege around Cannanore and brought the Muslim forces to their knees and offered them civilised treatment, if they surrendered. Then they pleaded to be allowed to send their messengers to their Sultan Qutb-ud-Din, who was at Madura to seek his permission to surrender. Ballala agreed. So, their messengers were allowed to go to Madura. But instead of bringing back the Sultan's order to surrender, they came back with new forces, treacherously attacked Ballala's forces without notice, overwhelmed them and captured Ballala. Then the Sultan acted in a barbarious manner. Ballala, the Bhishma of that age, was butchered. Is there any wonder that the Hindu masses grew enraged at those Muslim rulers, and rallied enthusiastically under the banners of such freedom fighters as Prolaya, Kapaya, Ballala, Vinayak Dev, Bukka Raya and his four brothers ! The irony of fate was that the civilised and humane Hindu princes came to be destroyed by the barbaric Muslim imperialists. Such has so often been the case, in all continents—to whit, the destruction of Aztec civilisation by the adventurers of Iberian Peninsula.

Mohammad Shah of Bahmani kingdom took offence at the moves of Bukka and Kapaya to regain their indepedence. Other hostile moves of many impetuous Hindu nayaks also annoyed him. So, he began to make preparations for again invading Hindu kingdom. Kapaya was also getting ready to mobilise his defence forces. So, he sent his messengers to Vijayanagar to plead for the Raya's support and they succeeded in obtaining the support of 20,000 troops and a

diversionary attack upon Bahmani kingdom's western areas. His son, Vinayak Dev marched at the head of the armies of Telangana and Vijayanagar to recapture the fortress of Kaulas. Unfortunately, the Bahmani forces proved victorious and devastated the Vijayanagar dominion, for over an year. Though in Telangana Vinayak Dev captured Bhuvanagiri in the beginning, Mohammad Shah overcame the nayak forces, besieged Warangal and forced Kapaya Nayak to offer tribute and obtain peace.

Vinayak Dev, who was as heroic and proud as his noble father Kapaya but not as wise, would not be content with the subordinate status forced upon the Hindu kings of Warangal and Vijayanagar. So, he bagan to prevent the replenishment of the forces of Arab horses by Bahmani. He encouraged the merchants and goldsmiths to melt down the Bahmani coins and thus defy the Muslim suzerainty. So Mohammad Shah again invaded Velumpattan in the domain of Vinayak Dev and captured the prince while he was trying to escape from the fort. when its defences fell.

True to the heroic traditions of nayaks, Vinayak Dev refused to accept the supremacy of Mohammad Shah and taunted him and his father of ingratitude and barbarism. Enraged by such a challenge and fearful of its awful affect upon the loyalty of his own princes, Mohammad Shah committed the inhuman act of cutting off the tongue of the brave but defeated commander-in-chief, princely prisoner and mahamandaleswara in his own right, and then hurling him "from a *menjanik* set up on the ramparts into the fire kindled below".

Vinayak Dev's heroism was so much like that of Abhimanya of Mahabharata age and Veera Balachandra Nayak of Palnad battle. He rallied the masses most wonderfully and won their hearts by his skilled generalship and unsurpassed bravery. He stood out as the most outstanding leader of the youth of both Karnatak and Andhra. It was therefore natural that the Turks hated and feared him. As was usual with those conquerors, Mohammad Shah plundered that city of Velumpattan.

But so popular were Vinayak Dev and his great father Kapaya, so enraged were the people by the barbaric treatment meted out to their beloved prince Vinayak Dev, that they engaged themselves in relentless campaign of sabotage, guerilla and fifth-column activities for a long time. They harassed the Sultan so much that he was compelled to order his men to burn the baggage together with the plunder, excepting jewels and gold in order to effect rapid marches and escape from their attacks. The harassments by the Telugus were so great that by the time the Sultan reached Kaulas, only about one third of his army was left active and even the Sultan himself received a wound in his arm.

During the whole of the period of their heroic resistance and retaliation against the Muslim invaders the Andhra masses displayed great and reckless heroism and demonstrated how greatly they loved the freedom and national honour

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It was after this tragedy, Bukka Raya of Vijayanagar sought the intervention of Delhi Sultan Firoz Shah. But Firoz had his own immediate problem to solve and so did not venture upon an invasion of Bahmani kingdom. Moreover, the Moulvis and many of the religious-minded sardars of Delhi contended with the Delhi Sultan that they should not go to the rescue of Hindu navaks as against their own Muslims of Devagiri, who, afterall acclaimed their Prophet and Islam and belonged to the same Turkish, Arab and Persian tribes.

Outraged by the inhuman treatment meted out to his beloved son Kapaya decided to stake his all in the war of retribution. But fate went against him and he had to own defeat. "The Sultan then moved (1424) his camp from Golconda, 90 miles away to the captured city (Warangal) and took possession of the buried treasures of ages, which had till now been preserved from plunder and accumulated yearly, by the economy of the rajas (Ferishta). These treasures however were only the accumulations of less than 100 years, for after the former sack of Warangal in 1323, the city was for some time the seat of a Mohammadan governor appointed from Delhi. This defeat cost too much for the Andhras. Golconda, the powerful and almost impregnable hillfort had to be surrendered. It became the boundary between Bahmani and Warangal kingdoms. As many as 300 elephants, 200 horses and 33 lakhs of rupees were given away. To add insult to injury, the famous turquoise throne with many precious stones valued at 35 lakhs had to be surrendered. The Hindu rulers had the mortification of learning how the Sultan ascended it at Gulbarga and indulged, during the riotous orgies of drunkenness and debauchery, and hurled unprovoked and unbearable insults at the rajas.

as engendered and exemplified among them by their noble leaders Prolaya, Kapaya and Vinayak Dev.

It was unfortunate for the whole of Dakshinapath that the Bahmani Sultan proved to be so ungrateful, aggressive and powerful, while some of the feudatory chiefs, led by Bhuvanagiri nayak had no compunction to make unpatriotic and treacherous deals with that Sultan. It was even more tragic that the very nayaks and their sons, who had co-operated so magnificently in their common war of liberation should have so blindly reverted to their pre-revolution habits. They refused to co-operate with the Nayaks of Warangal. The result was that once Kapaya's Warangal fell to Bahmani Sultan, the overall protection for national freedom of the South that Warangal ensured, collapsed and the nayaks of Bhuvanagiri, who succeeded Kapaya at Warangal, became too weak and bereft of any moral or political authority to prevent the horrors of Muslim conquest, such as forcible conversion, degrading large masses into slavery, dishonouring of women and desecration of temples and Hindu religious practices during their repeated campaigns of plunder.

The outstanding feature of Kapaya Nayak's statesmanship was his comradeship with the kings of Vijayanagar and Dwarasamudram. Throughout those decades of wars with the sultans of Bahmani, they worked together and protected Dakshinapath.

One cannot but admire the statesmanship and high sense of loyalty to allies and friends that both Prolaya and Kapaya from Andhra and Raya brothers and Ballala III and IV from Karnatak displayed during their four decades of undisputed moral leadership of Dakshinapath. They never gave any room for any suspicion or fear of ever causing any breach in their alliance.

Kapaya could never commit or contemplate any such ungrateful action. The sons of Tripurari Deva, Soma Deva and even Pandyas and Kerala princes continued to co-operate with Prolaya and Kapaya, long after the liberation of their

dominions and Dakshinapath from Muslim rulers, without any fear of invasion or rivalry or jealousy, as in the days of Pratapa Rudra.

How one wishes that other Indian rulers, whether of the Hindu period of Muslim era had behaved half as well ! If only they acted as scrupulously as those leaders of Nayak Confederation did, India's career would have been less unhappy and her people would have suffered less.

Kapaya was weakened by the death of his loyal allies, Veera Ballala, Harihara (Ray of Tiling as Muslims called him) and his redoubtable son Vinayak Dev. So, he could not arrest, when the next invasion came, the progress of the invading army of Mohammad Shah. He had to sue for peace and obtain it by offering heavy indemnity, ceding Golconda and surrender also the famous turquoise throne. They fixed Golconda as the boundary. Kapaya was able to extract the promise from Sultan by the resulting treaty that non-combatants and prisoners of war would not be killed or persecuted. The Bahmani Sultan, Mohammad Shah, kept his word by honouring that agreement during his life time and thus displayed his respect for nayaks' loyalty to dharma.

Obsessed by their rivalry for power with Kapaya and his alies, Singama's sons, Anavota and Mada Nayaka became blind to their responsibilities to Dakshinapath's freedom and unity. They invaded Kondavidu and Amaravati of Anapota Reddi and defeated and killed him in 1361. But his kingdom could not be annexed because of the police action taken by Kapaya in defence of Kondavidu Reddi Nayak. Anavota decided to take his vengeance against Kapaya, when Warangal's resources in men and money were depleted by patriotic struggles against the invaders from Gulbarga's Bahmani forces. When Anavota's forces invaded their domains, Anavema of Kondavidu, the brother of Anapota and Kumaragiri, appealed to Kapaya for help. So, Kapaya had no choice but to accept this challenge from his erstwhile colleagues and confederate princes who had betrayed the common cause of the confederacy over the past decades of struggle against the enemies of Bharatiya dharma.

But the police action taken by Kapaya against them because of their support to Bahmani Sultan must have come to be treated like any other traditional revolt of one nayak against another and neither religious sentiments nor dharmic injunctions could be invoked by Kapaya in his support. He could only rely upon his superior military strength and support he could invoke from his fellow nayaks to discipline those rebel nayaks. His moral position was further weakened by the appeal made to the Delhi Sultan by his ally, Bukka of Vijayanagar, after the cruel murder of Vinayak Dev.

In the meanwhile, he forgot that whatever moves he had made as between the foreign force with such good results, could also be made against him by his rebels and rivals within the Hindu fold.

The war took place in Bhimavaram, not far from his great and well-beloved capital, Warangal in 1367. Dame fortune favoured the rebels; Kapaya died a martyr on the battle-field. We learn from inscriptions of Mallavaram of 1325 and Santamaguluru of 1326 that Mallareddi brother of Prolaya Vema Reddi of Addanki and Kondavidu was a loyal ally of Kapaya in that war of independence. So, Kapaya felt it his confederate duty to go to the rescue of Kondavidu Nayak who continued to be his friend, when aggressive rival Singama Nayak waged war against the Reddi of Kondavidu, thus defying the confederate duty of unity.

The first Nayak who tried to drop out of that confederation of Nayaka was Erena Bhakti Raju, scion of the earlier Chodas, the overlords of Vengi. On the other hand Singama Nayak, one of the more powerful among the Nayaks, resented this interference of Kapaya, in his fight against the Reddi of Addanki and Kondavidu. He might have thought, it was time for him to challenge Kapaya when even such a smaller Nayak as Bhakti Raja displayed such courage to defy and join issue with Kapaya and engaged in war against the Warangal forces and killed Mummadi Nayak, who represented the confederacy in Rajahmumdry. Since fates favoured him as against Kapaya, he defeated that Kapaya and assumed his title of *Andhra*

Desadheesa or Adhyaksha.

Recherla nayaks triumphed. What an empty triumph it was! Anavota made haste to avow – what had been a secret understanding for over a decade—his allegiance to Bahmani kingdom and declared himself the King of Warangal, under Bahmani suzerainty.[2]

Why did Kapaya Nayak choose to wage war against Recherla nayak, who commanded only a few ports as compared to his hundred such forts? He risked everything in that local struggle and finally lost his life in that battle. The result proved to be disastrous not only to his family but also to the whole of Andhra and made it possible for the Muslim imperialism to reimpose its supremacy.

He must have felt that he should subjugate these rebellious nayaks and suppress the fifth-columnist activities; strengthen the loyal nayaks like Anapota who were being harassed by Recherla nayaks and thus ensure peace in Andhra. He might have also miscalculated the chances of such battles and grown over-confident about the strength of his forces. More than anything, he must have got vexed with the unpatriotic ambitions displayed by the rebellious nayaks without any consideration for all the sufferings and sacrifices made during those three decades of incessant and heroic battles waged by him, his noble uncle Prolaya and all their confederate nayaks and self-sacrificing lenkas. So he thought it might be better to risk everything even at that old age and put an end to those internal schisms or achieve immortal glory of death on the battle-field, befitt-

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2. True to the feudal traditions, even those Recherla nayaks who were installed by the Sultan after the death of Kapaya, found it necessary, from time to time, to assert their independence or resent too much of Gulbarga's domination. So, in 1424, the "King of Warangal withheld his tribute" and the Sultan had to wage war and defeat him. After all, the nayaks' spirit would not be content with eternal subordination!

These disabilities and difficulties were instinct with the then feudal system whether it was headed by Kapaya of Warangal or Mohammad of Gulbarga and Bahmani. The sentiments of unity or fellow-feeling among the nobility of the Bahmani kingdom did not, however, extend beyond the common desire to extirpate the idolaters.

ing a truly brave and patriotic nayak. The fortunes of that war benefited neither himself nor the Recherla nayaks but only helped the Bahmani Sultan and the successive Muslim rulers to gain their much-coveted supremacy over the whole of Andhra and Dakshinapath. That defeat of Kapaya strengthened the Muslim forces so much that during the subsequent two centuries or more, the Bahmani rulers and its successor Muslim rulers of Golconda, Bidar, Ahmednagar, Gulbarga gave no peace to the Vijayanagar rulers and eventually defeated the Vijayanagar emperor in Talikota battle in 1565 A.D.

Thus had fallen the popular and revolutionary Kakatiya regime of Durjaya clan. Thus came to an eclipse the glorious Andhra kisan Kakatiya line of Karikala Chola. The heroism, statemanship and patriotism of the kisan nayaks is the aroma and ennobling saga and song of self-sacrificing struggle for national freedom and dharma and inviolability of the personality and freedom of a human being.

The legacy of that prolonged war of liberation and regeneration of Hindus between 1323–1373 was the continuation of supremacy of dharma over kingly powers, feudal regimes and priestly ordinances. Fortunately, just as that post-Kakatiya umbrella of protection for the people of Dakshinapath held aloft by the Nayak Revolution was being thrown to the winds, it was picked up as it were from Kapaya's hands and continued to be unfurled for the next two centuries with as noble a mission by the stronger hands of his loyal allies and comrades, the Rayas of Vijayanagar and their Lenka Order.

It was the good fortune of Dakshinapath of that Kakatiya. Vijayanagar eras that the contemporaneous leaders at the highest levels of military and political responsibilities then happened to be Prolaya, Kapaya, Vinayak Dev, Harihara brothers and Veera Ballala III and IV, who were highly patriotic, heroic and dharmic-minded. They co-operated with each other unitedly and offered military assistance to each other and resisted the local inroads and invasions made by the agent of Delhi or sultans of Gulbarga. When Ballala III was murdered by Sultan of Madura, the Rayas of Vijayanagar and

nayaks of Andhra stood by his brave son Ballala IV in his continued fight with the Sultan. The young Ballala was also wise enough to look to the Rayas for leadership and thus helped in the consolidation of the whole of Karnatak and much of the former Chola regions. When Kapaya came to be weakened by the murder of Vinayak Dev and loss of Kaulas and Golconda the Rayas began to get ready to shoulder the principal burden of defending the rest of Dakshinapath. Therefore they were able to protect it and prevent Madura and Bahmani sultans from making any more gains in the South. Thus Bukka (later Kampa and Harihara II) became the actual *Suratrana* or overlord of Dakshinapath within five years after the unfortunate fall of his noble relative, ally and neighbourly colleague, Kapaya. He obtained willing co-operation of all the Telugu nayaks who remained loyal to the tradition of Kapaya and of Ballala IV and other nayaks of Karnatak and Tamil Nadu. Together, they fought and protected the social, economic and political hegemony and culture of the peoples of South India. In that way, the Indian cultural heritage and political integrity which had been sustained for about half a century by Warangal—Kakatiya nayaks, as the gate-keepers—came to be protected for the next two centuries by the Rayas of Vijayanagar and the Kakatiya nayaks who rallied under their banners and agreed to work under their leadership. Verily the aged Kapaya lived just long enough to pass on to equally heroic successors, the leadership of nayaks of Dakshinapath below the river Krishna.[3]

Fate of the Successors of Kapaya Nayak: One of his sons seemed to have been Prolaya Nayak, named after their Kakatiya ancestors as weel as his heroic leader, King Prolaya. In the fashion of those times, his son married a Chola princess called Chodamamba. They had two sons, Namaya and Koppa Bhupathi or Koppulayya (Koppula velamas might be carrying

3. The Velama and Reddi nayaks who began to rule over major portion of Andhra could not live and rule in peace with each other, nor did they offer wholehearted co-operation to the Rayas of Vijayanagar. The result was that the Reddi kingdoms lasted for hardly a century and were later absorbed into Vijayanagar and Golconda kingdoms and the Velama nayaks had to be content to be the feudatories of Golconda.

the clan heritage from that Koppulayya). This Koppulayya was married to princess Muppamadevi of the Muppaneni House. They had a son called Prolaya Nayaka II. After Kapaya died fighting in battle and his capital Warangal was captured by the chief Anavota Nayak, some of his nayaks retired with one of his sons, Prolaya, to the northern regions of the Godavari banks, carved out for themselves a separate domain stretching from Yeleru river up to Srikakulam. To indicate that though their family lost the Andhra *Desa* they still had their rightful sway over the Andhra people, they called their domain Andhra-Khanda-Mandala. The fact that their chiefs left inscriptions in Donepudi, south of river Krishna and in Vijayawada on the northern banks of the river in Krishna District and in Simhachalam indicates that even after their loss of Warangal, they continued their suzerainty for some time over the coastal districts. But as the local nayaks began to assert their independence in their own domains, they had to be content with their mahamandalam by the Godavari. They continued to withdraw more and more to north, until they found it possible to maintain their firm hold only over the Andhra country to the north of Yeleru, with Pithapuram as their capital.

The Reddi chiefs who had been encouraged by Anavota and Annaya Mantri, rose to be mahamandaleswaras and eventually achieved much power over the coastal area and ruled over the descendants of their former nayak overlords. In course of time, the Gajapatis from Kalinga and the Reddis from Kondavidu and Rajahmundry encroached upon their dominions. By the end of the 14th century they were reduced to the status of mandaleswaras. Their successors founded the House of Korrapati among Kammas, some others continued to belong to the Koppula House among Kammas, some others continued to belong to the Koppula House among Telagas, yet others formed the Koppula clan and became so depressed owing to vicious tides of times that they found protection from the persecution of Muslims, by ranging themselves with the Velama nayaks who made their peace with the sultans of Bahmani kingdom and were tolerated by the ascendant

Muslim rulers and lived as Koppula Velamas in Vizag, Srikakulam and Kalinga regions.

Another relative of Kapaya, namely Mummadi Nayak founded Korukonda fort (mandalam) of that name. Toyyoti Anvaota, a cousin of Kapaya ruled from Rajahmundry but he died by 1353, and his mandalam was annexed to that of Mummadi House of their relatives for better protection. The present-day village Mummadivaram must have been founded and named after those nayaks. His brother Singaya was also a powerful nayak. Their sons and cousins continued to be nayaks under the Reddi chiefs till the end of the 14th century.

Protection of Hindus or Avoidence of Persecution of Hindus

Singama Nayak and his son, Anapota Nayudu achieved victory in the battle of Pata Bhimavaram over Kapaya Nayak in 1372 and assumed the much prized title of "Andhra Desadhiswara" or the Lord of Andhra Desa. But they had to fight against the Reddi Nayaks of Addanki cum Gajapatis before they could stabilise their new leadership. Eventually they killed Peda Komati Vema of Kondavidu and gained control over Vengi region. But Anapota Nayudu had to fight many a battle, over decades with the Rayas, Reddy of Kondavidu either separately or with both together and again with the Reddy ruler of Rajahmandry either because of his own aggressions against their regions or in defending his regions against thier aggressions. In most of the fights, he had the Nawabs as his allies. Eventually Ahmad Shah Bahmani chose to break the decades-long alliance with the Velama Nayaks, who had been in possession of Warangal, after Kapaya's fall. Why? Because of the ostensible complaint that for once, the Nayak attempted for a short while to hearken to the call of Deva Raya II on behalf of Hindus and tried to aid him in his war with Gulbarga. Though the Nayak finally returned to the side of Sultan Ahmad Shah Bahmani, the Sultan marched against Telangana, killed the Nayak and incorporated Warangal in his kingdom reducing the Velama Nayaks and their allies as mere Vassals.

Thus closed in 1425 the separate Telangana Hindu Nayankaram or Kingdom under the Velamas, after the fall of Warangal, the capital of independent Hindu kindomg under Nayak confederacy.

It is possible that the venerable Singama Nayak, who had also been a partner, on the side of Kapaya-led Nayak confederation, in concluding the treaty of "No-war" between Bahmani and Warangal Kingdom in 1364 A.D. might have reached an understanding with Sultan Mohammad Shah that the Moslem rulers and their men would not forcibly interfere in the Hindu's way of religious life to destroy or desecrate Hindu temples before he agreed to join hands with him in undermining and destroying the leadership of Kapaya. How else could one explain the continuation of Hindu religious festivals and practices and protection of temples, even after the fall of Kapaya, during the prolonged period of overlordship of Bahamani Sultans over Andhra, during the Velama regime over Warangal after the fall of the Nayak confederacy and even when the Velama Nayaks were at war with Reddy Nayaks of Addanki, Kondavidu and Rajahmandry and their war with Gajapathis.

Most of the Nayaks, whether they be Telagas, Reddis, Boyas, or Kammas did not believe in the professions of the Sultans or in the propaganda of these Velama Nayaks who chose to collaborate with the Sultans and they preferred to leave Andhra and go to serve the newly emerging Vijayanagar Kingdom, vieing with Warangal of Kakatiyas as the champion of Hindus and their political regimes; while some of them, like the Reddi Nayaks of Addanki and Kondavidu, who preferred to remain in their Nayankarams continued to fight against both the new Nayaks of Warangal and their allies, the Sultans of Gulbarga. Thus, for nearly a century, the Reddi Nayaks succeeded in preventing the extension of Moslem rule over the Coastal areas and the Moslem cum Warangal axis was forced to remain content with their control over Telangana only.

The then feudal order of politics resulted in internecine and intermittent conflicts on the borders and even in invasions

of each others regimes between the Gajapatis of Cuttack and Kalinga, Rayas of Vijayanagar and Reddis of Kondavidu and Rajahmandry, leaving little scope for people's prosperity or political stability or democratic movements among Hindus.

That the spirit of resistance to Moslem proseletization and revolt against Moslem imperialism, which gave rise to Nayak's confederation under Prolaya - Kapaya leadership continued to uplift the Nayak's and sustain their morale is evident from the dynamic leadership and sustained support gained by the Nayaks who refused to accept the Recharla Nayak's guidance. Their successors continued to work for the triumph of the leadership provided by the Vijayanagar Rayas, as the most satisfying and reliable for the Hindus. That this spirit of resistance and revolt continued to maintain the morale of successive generations of these Nayaks is indicated by the following historical incident, during Emperor Akbar's reign quoted by the historian Sri K.L. Narayana in his book "History of Sayapaneni Nayaks". When Akbar's messengers suggested to the Raya Venkata Deva (1585–1614) that he should peacefully accept the suzereinty of Emperor Akbar and avoid war with Delhi, the Raya gave the following dignified reply, befitting the leader of the Nayaks of Hindus regime of the South over centuries: "My Kingdom is in the hands of God and if he wishes to deprive me of my empire, who will be able to stop him? So much is certain, however, that I shall never kiss his feet should he (Akbar) ever come here, and war is sure to follow".

This Kakatiya Nayak's high sense of trusteeship towards the people and towns and villages within their Nayankarams and their readiness to sacrifice their lives in the discharge of their leadership came to be displayed in such a poignant manner - reminiscent of the Japanese cult of Hari Kiri - as late as 1742.

The Hyderabad Nizam Ul-Mulk Amir Mir Fazrullah destroyed the prosperous town of Daddanala, headquarters of Nayankaram of China Venkatadri Nayudu and plundered its wealth, when the Nayak was away. On his return, the Nayak

found his army, relatives and followers destroyed or driven away. He felt so chagrined for his failure to fight in their defence and die in their company that he proceeded to pray for peace for the dead, and then, stabbed himself to death to atone for his failure in Nayak's duty to protect his people. (K.L. Narayana's History of Sayapaneni Nayaks).

Let us also look at the obverse side of the coin of Nayak's role. We find that the Velama Nayaks who had chosen to bow before the tempests of repeated Moslem invasions, with their ever swelling armies including foreign adventurers, local volunteers and merceneries recruited from among the long-suppressed socially-backward and poverty-stricken masses, who were being converted into Islam, have also achieved some protection for Hindu masses. The destruction of temples was stopped, though new temples could not be raised. The Brahmins and other priests of all Hindu religious orders were allowed to perform their pujas. Forcible conversions were not so frequent. The local village administration was not interfered with. It is true that much of this protection or freedom from interference had to be yielded by the Moslem over-lords because of the presence of the powerful Vijayanagar Hindu Empire and its vigilant Rayas and Nayaks. That those Nayaks, including most of the Velamas in the Southeastern Nayankarams, a few Reddis, Kammas and Telagas and their followers, who included quite a large number o Munnuru Kapus, Balija, Reddi, Muttaraju and Kamma Warriors and Village chiefs, known as Kapus, Reddis, Chettis Chowdaries and their followers were ever ready to checkmate and obstruct peacefully and when found possible, to violently oppose any large-scale inroads into Hindu ways of life must have also acted as an effective limit to Moslem Sultan's religious imperialism. How else could the tradition of religious tolerance have grown in the Nizam's reign for about two centuries in Telangana? By the time of Abul Hasan Kutub Shah Taneesha (1658–1687), the Nizam of Hyderabad came to accept responsibility of protecting, if not patronising, such temples as that of Sree Rama of Bhadrachalam.

The inter-religious harmony which came to prevail in these Southern regions from Daulatabad stood in high contrast with the highly intolerant Moslem domination of North India excepting Rajasthan. Almost all the temples of antiquity in the North were either destroyed or allowed to crumble out of neglect. New temples were not allowed to be constructed. Famous temples even in Benares were converted into Mosques. The main justification offered by Aurangzeeb for his terribly intolerant, begoted and prolonged wars against the Kingdoms of Bahmani region, especially Golconda was the religious tolerance shown towards Hindus and Hinduism by Taneesha. So, this is also an achievement, worthy of Nayak's leadership of the Hindus of Telangana and Andhra, though, it is not as heroic and uplifting as that of those Nayaks who refused to bow and bend before the invaders and who preferred to opt for the leadership of the Rayas.

Aurangazeb was a fundamentalist like Khomeni of Iran, while the Iraq's leaders were like the Nawabs of Golconda. —Ed.

XIII. LEGACY OF KAKATIYA NAYAKS

What happened to the Nayaks after the disruption of Nayak Confederacy? Quite a number of them, belonging mostly to Velama clan felt that they could best serve the Hindu religion as well as their own political interest by bowing to the inevitable and accepting the overlordship of the Muslims. Hence the survival of Velama feudatories throughout the coastal districts and central areas of Telangana through the Mohammadan, French and British regimes of six centuries. Many withdrew into Kalinga regions, joined forces with the Gajapathis and on their subsequent fall, came to be depressed into Koppula Velamas, by the conquering Moslem and British rulers. A few Reddi Nayaks, with their capitals at Addanki, Kondavidu, Rajahmundry, who sheltered themselves on either side of the Krishna and later on the banks of Godavari, managed to survive for a century in riskily poised independence, alternating between periods of submission, payment of tribute to the Bahmani and later Golconda sultans or undeclared independence or vice versa.

Some withdrew under the leadership of Annama Deva, brother of Pratapa Rudra Deva into the fastnesses of the Bastar and Jeypore forests, hills and valleys and founded the state of Bastar with Chitrakuta as its capital and the sacred Pampa river for its water-supplies and sheltered as it was by the high peaks of the plateau, impassable ravines and forests along the Eastern Ghats. Even the British could not subdue the Bastar state and had to be content to treat its Maharajas as semi-autonomous princes, thanks to their comradeship with the war-like Savaras or Sabaras of Sabari ancestry and Marias; the great tribe of Srirama's times. The princes of Bastar state had continued to claim their descent from Kakatiyas.

A good number of Nayaks and their followers got disgusted with what they considered to be the betrayal of national cause, on the part of some of the Nayaks by their submission

to the Muslim rulers and so retired from their military profession and surrendered their feudal rights and took pride in becoming peasants and developing agriculture with equal zeal. However, they took care, despite the vengeful campaign of the new rulers and their allies to persecute them whenever and wherever they were discovered to have belonged to families of the Kakatiya *veeras,* to maintain their martial traditions, in their manly games such as chiri, Baligudu, Kotikommanchi, the *veera puja ayudha puja* celebrations, and also through their regal jewels, especially the Rayani or Ragidi, a golden tiara for their wedded daughters and the display of *tiara* or the regal insignia and the donning of the consecrated sword by their youths at the time of their marriages. To don such a sword, during marriage, an armlet at social functions and to carry a chip of the family's nayak pottery when going to distant places were their reminders of the high state of Kakatiya Nayanimgaru. Their scions and successors have come to be split up into various clans, in course of the vicissitudes they had to undergo during most these centuries Kammas continued to openly claim their direct descent from the Kakatiya tradition and dare all the successive Muslim rulers and their Hindu allies.

Some preferred to be known as Telugus, Munnuru Kapus of Telangana and Telagas, some as Adi Velama, Balijas, Chetti Balijas, Gajula Balijas, Ganuga Balijas, Telikas, Perikas, Muthrasu or Mudi Rajus, Velamas and Reddis. Some wanted to escape from the vengeance of the Muslim rulers by not attempting to regain political power and hiding their ambitions. They were, however, unwilling to completely surrender as so many others did to the invaders. So, they retained the traditional insignia of martial prowess, that is, the cone-like hair-do *(koppu)* for all males while sheltering under the political umbrellas of Velama mandaleswaras and so, came to be known as Gaura Velamas, Koppula Velamas, to be found now in such numbers in Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts. Many a village chieftain, known as Reddi, withdrew into the hills to the north of the river Godavari and became the Konda doras or Reddis, and came to be recognised by the British as muthadars.

Quite a number of them had to flee into the marshy regions by the sea from the vengeful raids of the Muslim rulers for whom it was as natural to hate, distrust and hunt down the scions of the brave erstwhile Kakatiya nayaks, as the Red Indians have come to be ferreted out in U.S.A. They have had to take to sea-faring and fishing as main sources of living, besides the fitful cultivation of the sandy dunes and they are now known as Palles, Pulagapu (mixed) Reddis. Those few who did not mind, being known as loyal nayaks of Kakatiyas who came to be recognised as Kamma and Kapu nayaks have had to suffer successive waves of persecution from the Muslim rulers.

So many others preferred to go to Vijayanagar kingdom founded by Harihara and Bukkaraya and Vidyaranya to create the new leadership for Hindus. The princely Kammas, Reddis, Boyas and Balijas accepted Nayankarams under the Vijayanagar rulers who were their own compeers and relatives. They co-operated in building the Hampi-Vijayanagar city-fort. The great dominions brought together by Gangaya Sahini Ambadeva and Tripurari Deva with their new fortresses of Ganginenikonda and Gandikota came to be attached to the new kingdom. The Hoysalas of Dwarasamudram lived in alliance with the Rayas, thanks to the farsighted diplomatic triumph of Kapaya Nayak. So, even though Warangal fell again to the Muslims, after the break-up of the Nayak Confederacy, the emergence of Vijayanagar into an empire had become a *fait accompli* because of the loyalty and prowess of the Andhra, Kannada and Chola nayaks.

The nayaks of Vijayanagar could easily enter into the neighbouring Chola kingdom since Kanchi and Madura cholas were maritally associated with Kakatiyas and Ballala IV welcomed the extension of Raya's protection. The restless warriors among the Kamma, Telaga, Choda, Reddi nayaks and their allies spread themselves over the whole of Tamil Nadu, Kolar and other neighbouring mandalams of Mysore and established themselves as mandaleswaras. During the 15th and 16th centuries, they founded the great nayak kingdoms of Vellore, Kanchi, Ginji, Tanjore, Madura, Trichinopoly, etc.

They and their followers distinguished themselves by their military prowess, constructive political abilities and abiding interest in the spread of Indian culture and dharma. They and their rank and file became famous for their love of agriculture. They cleared forests, built irrigation works, founded many villages and developed rural culture and crafts. They introduced improved methods of agriculture and husbandry, such as seed-drill ploughing, mixed farming and multiple-cropping and cattle-rearing, then prevalent in Rayalaseema. They encouraged arts, settled immigrant artisans, notably handloom weavers and whole complement of rural artisan professions. They protected and improved the great temples built by the Cholas and built their own temples in Madura, Kanchi, Tanjore and Trichy, Helebid, Melkote, Belur. Thus they developed the arts and crafts and settled down in Tamil Nadu and Karnatak as honoured and well-cherished leaders of rural society and cultural activities and grew to be the beloved of the country, because their cultural heritage and practice of dharma were the same as those of the local people.

It is noteworthy that those Kakatiya nayaks did not care to take up any of the forts and their mandalams in the coastal districts and seek subordinate political power under the Muslim kings. They knew that the new rulers would not entrust them with mandalika powers in view of their leadership of the rebel confederacy, their repeated revolts and their outspoken resentment of Delhi and Bahmani Sultan's domination. Most of them abstained from accepting any type of service under the Muslim rulers and their Hindu chieftains. Many of the Kammas, Telagas, Reddis are glad to call themselves as Kapus, indicating their proud association of their nayak phalanxes with the famous Kapaya Nayak, the *Andhra Desa Suratrana.*

It was in commemoration of the heroic contributions and sacrifices offered by the tribal chiefs and nayaks during those five great wars and two more battles waged under the leadership of Pratapa Rudra Deva and the later two wars of independence against the Delhi sultans and four wars against the Bahmani sultans between 1303–1385 and the recapture of

national independence for over two decades that their descendants have come to be hailed as the Neni or Nayak, Needu. Rayudu or Kapu or Naidu or Needu or Reddi or such and such Nayak of that heroic period, or cumulatively as the descendants of the Munnuru (300) Kapus of the Kapaya ancestry or following. Telagas, Reddis, Kammas are hailed as Kapus in different areas and their local leaders as Pedda Kapus.

Their love of Indian culture, devotion to Indian religious faiths and passion for the independence of their country and traditional freedoms were displayed in a cumulative and disciplined manner in those unrivalled spasms of sacrifices and sufferings, exhibitions of martial prowess and reckless offerings of their precious lives at the altar of Andhra *Desa* and Bharat dharma as symbolised by Kakati Devi at Warangal and Bhuvaneswari at Vijayanagar, the supreme source of all lives as conceived by both the Saivites and Vaishnavites. The traditional bards attached to the nayaks sang the songs and ballads of admiration of their particular mandaleswaras and their followers, allies and relatives. To this day, even the humblest of the members of the various clans and tribes among the nayaks of Dakshinapath derive so much inspiration and passion for herioc deeds from the recitations of the ballads and songs about the role played by their nayak heroes during those Kakatiya, Prolaya-cum-Kapaya, Vijayanagar wars, waged against the Delhi and Bahmani sultans and later Golconda, Bijapur and Gulbarga sultans.

The reckless, determined heroic defence offered by those nayaks over such a long span of time and in fort after fort and through battle after battle so repeatedly had so impressed the contemporary masses that they developed their tradition, at once so popular and deeply emotional, of offering an annual homage to those heroes and their heroism. Thus has arisen the cult of *veera puja* into which every kisan and tribal child, including the Harijans, is initiated in every home function. Thus also the high standard of patriotic endeavour set up by Kapaya Nayak has made every mother to imprint on the impressionable mind of her son to grow to be a Kapu, the protector of dharma and freedom, the same way as Kapaya did.

The Kakatiya kisans living in Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Karnatak and Maharashtra have ever since drawn so much inspiration and encouragement for venturing on similar deeds of heroism from the annual recitation of those ballads by their bards and poets and have continued to cherish the exemplary heroism and patriotism displayed by those nayaks and the Palnad heroes, their predecessors The descendants of almost every one of those noble warrior-nayaks vied with each other in hailing them as their clan exemplars and chiefs and founders of their families and successors. All others responded by honouring their families.[1]

All credit to those families who have thus displayed through these centuries, the ever fresh admiration of the contribution made by those nayaks of Kakatiya age and of the earlier Rashtrakuta, Chalukya, Chola and Pallava vintage to India's saga of freedom, independence and heroism.

Kakatiyas inherited from the Cholas and Chalukyas the powerful institutions of peasant-proprietorship and craft guilds and Panchayats. The Vijayanagar Rayas and nayaks of the South cherished those institutions and the Muslims and British, who succeeded them dared not destroy them, though they tried to undermine them. Sri Thomas Munro reinstated this *ryotwari* proprietorship in 19th century, in preference to the Hyderabad Muslims' incubus encouraging collective farming by villages, by a few favoured court favourites.

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1. Such are the clans of Veera Gandham, Veerapa Neni, Maki Neni, Machi Neni, Veera Macha Neni, Surapa Neni, Nannapa Neni, Nagi Neni, Muppa Neni, Parvata Neni, Kommi Neni, Rami Neni, Tripura Neni, Gangi or Gogi Neni, Komati Neni, Chode, Oruganti, Immadi, Mummadi, Gandu, Ontari, Revella, Kesarineni, Surireddi, Kantamaneni, Guttikonda, Sayapaneni, Saranu, Nagalla, Gadde, Musunuru. Ambadi, Kota, Kotagiri, Velugu, Velugoti, Gadi Reddi, Vasi Reddi, Komma Reddi, Kommi Reddi, Rata Konda, Rasula Konda, Revula, Revella, Ravi, Rayidi, Sabbi. Palle, Pallepu, Velamati, Anegondi Gondi, Lakkamsani, Bottini. Bolli Neni, Penuganti, Inaganti, Kota, Triperineni, Hanumora, Lingam, Manyam, Myneni, Chintamaneni, Mummalaneni, Manne, Katineni, Mikkilineni, Manigam, Sagi, Nalllaboth, Kosaraju, *Lakkamsani*, Kolasani, Chelasani.

The soul of these systems is the self-employed status of their votaries. i.e., peasants and artisans who knew no masters above them apart from the village commonwealths (panchyats) which supervised the operation of their mutual codes of conduct.[2]

There were elaborate regulations, traditionally respected by all sections but administered primarily by the village panchayats and finally by the kings, to settle how forests were to be cleared, by whom, and reclaimed lands to be allotted to whom and on what conditions. In the same way, the village panchayat had the power to allot lands and house-sites from out of the unoccupied public lands (*gram kantham*) within their jurisdiction to deserving or needy peasants of homeless workers. Panchayat authorities used to have clear instructions for measuring the fields, supervising the crops raised and assessing land revenue to be paid to the king through the panchayat. They also had powers to recommend certain concessions in the begining of land reclamation of suspension of land revenue, when crops failed. No king claimed ownership or overlordship over peasants' holdings. Never did a king or mahamandaleswara claim to grant a field of land to any one without first of all compensating the owner and obtaining the permission of the panchayat.

Similar powers and privileges were exercised by craft guilds and freedom of following the craft and owning the artisans.

It was because of these centuries-old traditions of enjoying the fundamental rights over their holdings, implements and crafts that the rural masses of the Kakatiya age were able to throw up successive phalanxes of war-like nayaks and lenkas

> Most of the beneficial and ameliorative functions of the government were discharged by the village communities, in which the popular element predominated. The will of the people could thus make itself felt along certain lines in the affairs of the government only through the channels of the village panchayats. "Early History of the Deccan".

to man the armies of Kakatiyas, during those 20 years of struggle between Delhi sultans and Veera Pratapa Rurdra.

When Pratapa Rudra was captured and nayak system of leadership almost collapsed, in the face of Delhi's imperial sway, those nayaks and lenkas and their troops had their holdings and crafts to go to and their commonwealths and guilds to assuage their political and physical wounds. Thus these two socio-economic institutions, resting so firmly on the inviolable social matrix of the masses and sanctified by millennium-old fundamental right of toilers proved to be the life-giving source of social and economic freedoms of Hindu masses.

The contemporary poets like Baddena of *Sumati Sutakam*, Vemana, the sage of 16-17 century, used to exhort not only the traditional peasants but also Brahmins to turn to agriculture and go back to their holdings and carry on cultivation with the aid of bullocks if and when the rulers did not pay salaries, accord honourable treatment. Some poets led by Potanna used to challenge rulers that if they would not allow them to live honourable and free life at court in the cities, they would prefer to live as peasants, because their holdings would be their sources of independent living and their bullocks, their reliable aids and their crops and homes, their unquestioned possessions.

The Kakatiya nayaks and lenkas, who rose from their holdings or crafts, who absorbed that poetic and professional spirit of independence remained true to their social matrix and continued to cherish and strengthen those fundamental ights. It is because of that, so many of them were able to refuse to accept the Delhi's imperialism, turned their face against conversion to Islam and continued to fight successive waves of imperialism as exemplified by Maratas' revolt against Delhi under the leadership of Shivaji. The Tamilian, Kanarese, Maharashtrian and Telugu peoples have remained loyal to that tradition and it is that self-employment status which has sustained to this day their spirit of independence. If anyone were asked to single out from among the legacies of

nayaks' role in the history of Dakshinapath since the days of Cholas, Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, their championship of this fundamental right of self-employment based on peasant proprietorship and artisanship would be mentioned as the first and the greatest achievement

Kakatiya architecture also attained a new high level of excellence and magnitude. The ruins of Hanumakonda and Ramappa temples indicate creative greatness of those sculptors of Kakatiya age The remains of the temple in the heart of the Warangal fort, which had been destroyed with all the fury of the Muslim invaders are witness to the glory of their skill and master-minds. The four majestic gates, carved out of solid black granite bespeak of the power of mind, plan and grandeur of achievements of that age and they were an improvement on the famous *toranas* at Sanchi. Their great sculptors descended from the Andhra guild of architects who fashioned the Sanchi *toranas* If we are to accept the majestic head of the broken statue carved out of black stone and its replicas which we find strewn among the architectural finds placed in the central enclosure of these four gates, to represent the last of the Kakatiya emperors. namely Pratapa Rudra Deva, we cannot but marvel at the beauty, strength and stature of that great scholar-warrior and the skill of the architects and sculptors of that age. (One of these specimens is kept in a place of honour in Gobhumi, the residence of Rangaji and Bharathi Devi, the noble scions of that order of Nayaks and Lenkas—Ed.)

The exquisite carving and polish that we find on the thousands of figurines of elephants, houses, serpents, damsels, and *dwarapalakas* and the enticing beauty imprinted by the honeyed chisels on the life-size damsels, in their black stone bodies of Greecian grace with their ebony polish. do credit to Lord Vishnu's *Dasavatar* lotuses in Ramappa temple and to India's peerless architects. They seem to have been much impressed by Rudrama's heroism that they chiselled figures of woman-riders on most of the horses on the gates and pedestals.

Those *Silpa Acharyas* (sculptors) must have migrated to the distant Hoysala after the fall of Kakatiyas. They set their hands and chisels again at the construction of the famous temples of Melkot and Halebid under the patronage of Hoysalas, the erstwhile allies of Kakatiyas The skill and grandeur of conception and success of achievement displayed so fully over the Ramappa temple; such as the exquisite chiselling of the inverted lotus with *Dasavataras* built into the ten lattices, are repeated again and again as *Dasavatar* and *Navagraha* with the same devotion and in an equally beautiful manner on the alcoves, pillars, platforms and *gopurams* of the Mysore temples of Hoysalas and later in the Hampi temples and *Raths*, and Tadpatri and Lepakshi temples and *gopurams* of Vijayanagar era. Kakatiya rulers were destroyed, nayaks dispersed, priests driven away, architects forced to emigrate, temples turned into mosques, but the ageless Kakatiya sculpture and architecture and Kakatiya devotion to the cult and love of Hinduism have been immortalised by those *Silpa Acharyas*, The film taken in Telugu and Kannada about the life of *Amara Silpi* Jakkana has paid well-deserved homage to those great *Silpa Acharyas*, who were as devoted to their craft and as immortal as the great Michael Angelo of Europe The National Museum in New Delhi, museums of Vijayawada and Guntur display quite a large collection of the samples of the architectural creations of Kakatiya, Hoysala and Vijayanagar eras. ranging from the 12th to 17th centuries.

In consequence of the stiff resistance offered by the nayaks, in and outside the Confederation. to the *Muslimisation* of the administration and social institutions, the Bahmani sultans had to abandon all hopes of displacing local leadership. So, they were content with their overlordship and military control over the Andhra and other regions of the South. It is indeed remarkable that noteven one from out of the many Zamindars who continued to hold their feudal authority under the Moslems or the British cared to abandon Hinduism and embrace the religion of the overlords so great was their Nayak spirit of self respect, even though they had to bow before imperial masters.

Thus there came to be a few relieving features of the Muslim conquest of Dakshinapath, as the invaders settled themselves down as the rulers of the Deccan. They decided to let the local administration remain largely in the hands of the local population, which was so overwhelmingly Hindu and their traditional leaders. According to Gribble, "it must always be remembered that the Mohammadan conquests, not only in the Deccan but also throughout India, were the conquests by a foreign army of the forts and strongholds. The country itself was left untouched and the fort, once taken, was either razed like Vijayanagar, or leaving garrison there, the army marched on. The Hindu ryots were left free to till their fields as before, and the only difference to them was that they paid their land tax to a Mohammadan instead of a Hindu landlord. The artisans and merchants still plied their crafts as formerly; it was only the members of the royal families who retreated before the conquerors. A large number of the landed proprietors were also allowed to remain with authority to collect the land revenue on condition, however, that they paid a fixed rent to the government. Over each small district was placed a Mohammadan governor; who was supported by a small body of troops, with which he kept order. It was the presence of these outposts, with the army at headquarters ready to back them up that kept the country in order. There was no occupation of the country by the Mohammadans, and no settlement of the conquerors in the rural parts. The Hindu population remained a nation as separate and as a part as it had been when they were ruled by their own countrymen. Their customs and their religious rites remained the same. When the wave of war swept over their villages, their temples and shrines were desecrated, but in those places which had not been visited by the foreign army, the old structures still remained and during times of peace, they were not molested. Some of these Hindu zamindars proved faithful servants and brought with them their own retainers to serve in the Mohamamadan armies. In this way the Constitution of the Mohammadan armies of the Deccan underwent a gradual change. Whether it was owing to constant feud between the foreign and the Deccan Mohammadans, or whether foreigners found grea-

ter attractions in the armies of the great Delhi emperors, cannot now be said; it seems certain that there was no longer the same quantity of volunteer adventurers from foreign parts, from whom to recruit the Deccan armies. It, therefore, became the custom to recruit the ranks largely from among the Hindu war like tribes."

Yet, most of the descendants of Kakatiya nayaks who remained loyal to the spirit of Prolaya, Kapaya, Vinayak Dev and their Confederation abstained from joining the Muslim armies and the subsequent British armies.

XIII. FAILURES OF NAYAK AGE

India's history has witnessed, by fits and starts and that too in varying degrees in diffent regions, rising phases of progress of her people from their premordial stage of barbarism, sub-humanism, slavery, semi-slavery to independent peasantism and free and progressive villagism and harmonious agro-industrial development. It has not witnessed the people progressing from tribal chieftainship to tribal demcoracy, or tribalism to cosmopolitanism or from tribal chiefs to kings, controlled by those chiefs as in England and France during the period between the 14th and the 16th centuries. Parliaments broadening their dependence and response to the people as in England, or exploding into a social revolution as in France, were unkown to India of the Kakatiya nayaks. Instead, just as the whole of Russia and Balkan peoples had gone under worst types of despotism and slavery on a mass scale and imperialism of the Turks over the whole of the Slav peoples, so also Indian society and people had gone on helplessly into deeper and deeper depths of degradation.

The advent of Aryan agricultural and pastoral people into Indian social life and on the political horizon arrested the growth of the Dravidian urban civilisation, with its faith in one supreme Shiva and with its minimum of idol worship in the shape of Shiva and Mother Goddess. From then onwards Indian life benefited much from the contributions of Aryans and their impact upon the masses of India, but only in the direction of agrarian development, interspersed by pockets of urban civilisation and with the golden-lining of princely courts and culture. But India could not go ahead into. further phases of urban civilisation and industrial and agricultural development, taking the Mahenjadaro, Harappa, Indraprastha, Nalanda and Amaravati achievements in material and moral realms as the bases. Casteism based upon the earlier tribalism came to be buttressed by the Aryan social philosophy and religious faith which attributed divine origins and sanctions

to so many of the depressing practices. True, Aryan civilisation gave us many ennobling conceptions of social duties of rulers and caste-elders on one side and rights of families and their members on the other. They were all embodied. for popular understanding, in the stories of Mahabharata, Ramayana, and also in the Aryan literature of the famous Gupta era in Indian history.

Indian people and their civilisation have come to be uplifted and saved from the autocracy of tribal elders, man-hunting practices and beastiality of inter-tribal warfare and the whims and fancies and irresponsibility and inhumanity flowing from the doctrine of "Divine Right of Kings" *(Na Vishnu Pruthvi, pathihi)* by the tibal republics of Buddha's age and by the *Arya Rishi*. Asoka adopted it as the lead-star for his state policy and declared to the whole world the faith of his empire in the principle *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*, the essence of humanism. This Indian conception of dharma is so much more comprehensive in its scope and equally helpful to the growth of humanity as the Roman conception of rule of law. The principal characteristic of India has been its general acceptance and universal observance of this concept of dharma despite many odds. This had helped the Indian society to continue its progress towards its present-day campaign for the extension of human rights to all sections of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and sex.

However, while western Europe was marching towards social and political revolution, Indian society dominated by feudal force was getting deeper into the morass of centrifugal political society of almost irresponsible rulers, who had no respect for principles of mutual respect, tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

Then came the Muslim invasions. Even the reality of their terrors, punitive depredations degrading large masses of defeated people into slavery and their cultural challenges did not help the Hindu social leaders over three centuries to re-orient their political and social ideas and systems, conceive suitable principles, and approaches, to enable their society and peoples

to take time by its forelock and begin to achieve social or political revolution.

So far as Dakshinapath was concerned, even when Pratapa Rudra Deva's Kakatiya empire came to be threatened by repeated Delhi Muslim invasions over two decades and after the invasions of the whole of South India by Malik Kafur and successors of Ala-ud-Din, like Ulugh Khan, etc. and even after the disastrous defeats suffered by the nayaks and their armies, neither their social leaders, religious heads, nor their political chiefs thought of ways and means by which the masses could be inspired, roused, educated and otherwise helped to rise to their full height of humanity and make common cause with one another in developing the needed social and political revitalisation and reorganisation. That was just about the time when Wycliffs of England, the religious democrat, began to wage his struggle against the Catholic Churches' totalitarianism and the Clergy's worldly exploitation of its privileges.

The great premier Basava (1150–63) had started similar revolt centuries earlier from Dakshinapath and tried to administer shocks to Hinduism and its retrograde system of caste gradations and taboos. Its votaries, notably Bhaskara, certainly came to awaken certain sections of Kakatiya masses and fertilize poetical thoughts and religious observances of some sections of the masses. It did raise some sections of the toiling people to the level of self-respecting humanity although its priests were also misleading them to think in terms of their rivalry with other sister Hindu sects. But it could only lead to the development of another cult among Hindus. Brahmin priests succeeded in permeating this cult also and robbed it of much of its revolutionary spirit and denigrated peoples' literature in preference to pundit's poetry. The farsighted Brahma Nayak (of Palnad war) of the 12th century (1176–1182) tried to loosen the caste taboos, overcome the social discriminations against Harijans by organising inter-caste cosmopolitan public feasts and by raising a Harijan leader to the status of commander-in-chief of his armies. Yet, even that Veera Vaishnavism failed to persuade people to overcome the prevalent order of caste

gradations and dismiss the social privileges of higher castes and move towards social or political equality.

The kisan masses had gone on growing in their political stature through their centuries-old process of broadening their base by inter-marriages with absorption and adaptation to the scions of successive clans of ruling peoples who were streaming into Andhra, i.e. Pallavas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Cholas, Gajapatis.

The stratification of casteism, in particular, of the clans among the broad kisan masses, came to be strengthened by the unwise codification achieved by Pratapa Rudra I, the father of Ganapati Deva. That royal act raised mere clans into separate castes with their own sub-clans being raised to the status of separate sub-castes, with their own chiefs empowered to settle their internal social problems and disputes. This stratification not only weakened that progressive historical social process, but also broke up in course of centuries, that massive kisan social order into so many more or less exclusive castes with all the social privileges of the caste chiefs.

Emperor Pratapa Rudra tried to achieve social unity and political integration by helping the Velama, Balija, Boya, Mutrasu, Telika, Vontari and Reddi sections of the broad Kamma kisan masses to overcome some social taboos that had been forced upon them by according them equality of status with that of the other martial sections, in view of their achievements during the wars waged by him against some of the Dakshinapath rulers and against the Muslim invaders.

Contemporaneously. the contrary process which was highly conducive to the development of subsequent national integration was going on in England, where Celts, Danes, Normans and others were being fused into the English masses.

In England Wat Taylor[1] was trying to rouse English peasants against the tithes imposed by the Church and the

1. Wat Taylor's revolt 1381.

feudal oppressions and began to question the claims of feudal and Church lords to be gentlemen, set up far above the masses of peasantry. The irony of Indian fate was that the contemporaneous military chieftains and their martial followers were trying to raise themselves to enjoy higher social status and political privileges, not by challenging the rights of priests and princes but by coaxing, begging, or bribing them to accord to them higher social status, religious blessings and recognise their *de facto* political achievements into *de jure* political status.

During the succeeding four centuries, Europe was moving farther away from feudalism. But India, more so Dakshinapath was rushing into greater stratification of *puranic* taboos and privileges and discriminations against lower cadres of society.

The Kakatiya nayaks in Dakshinapath who rose against Muslim imperialism and achieved national freedom, moved towards princely order and did not champion the rights of the peasants and the political freedom of people. Instead of reducing the powers of the kings and developing their Confederation into a kind of parliament, like the parliaments of contemporary England and France, they had driven the peasants more and more into the embrace of social and political reactionaries. In other words, the Muslim invasion of Dakshinapath served the interests of the reactionary sections of priests, status-mongering cadres of nayaks and strengthened the tentacles of the octopus of religious taboos The egalitarian tendencies of Islamic teachings, non-discriminatory Muslim social life and its ennobling faith in one and only one God, failed to make Hindus to move at least in the direction of Basava, Brahma Nayak, Madhva and Pratapa Rudra and achieve social and religious reformation. On the other hand, the centuries-old pall of kingship or overlordship drew additional strength both from Muslim invasions and Nayaks' Confederation, as much because both Islam and the orthodox Hinduism did not give any encouragement to revolts against kingly order as because of the need of the people for

centralised or militarised leadership to protect themselves from foreign politics, and religious invasions

The tendency of nayaks towards assuming more powers could not be effectively countered by the stray instances of defiance by a few poets. For instance, Vemulavada Bhima Kavi ridiculed and cursed a few nayaks and brought them to their knees Potana, the famous author of Telugu Bhagavatam (the story of Lord Krishna) refused to dedicate his great epic poem to Sarvagna Singa of Bhuvanagiri, a century and half after the Nayaks' War of Independence, and preferred to let the raja bury his epic poem—the result of life-long work in poetry and devotion–rather than bow before the dictates of the prince to prefer him to Lord Rama for dedication. But unfortunately, the other poets of that age, including the equally eminent Srinatha, preferred to write panegyrics of those princes and ridicule the poverty-striken and suffering masses. Hence the growth in the pride, power and prejudices of nayaks *vis-a-vis* the masses of their own religion, culture and race.

For a time, the village commonwealths continued to shield and shelter the masses from the evil consequences of this rise in power of the nayaks and the princes. Their practice of Bharatiya dharma and their insistence upon their autonomy in dealing with the day-to-day social issues of the people and their continued recognition of the status of caste chiefs in villages and by regions to settle their caste problems, protected the people from interference and limited the supremacy of princely nayaks. Gradually the village panchayats lost their powers to hereditary village officers who came to be recognised by the princely nayaks and from whose ranks many of them had risen to nayak status These new agents of the state proved to be convenient agents of rising gradations or the new princely cadres in suppressing and impoverishing the masses. This process was strengthened by the Muslim rulers who established themselves in Telangana and coastal regions after the fall of nayaks' independent regime. And that order of feudal exploitation, religious begotry among Hindus, the forcible Islamic conversions and the authority of nayaks-cum–village officers

came to impose itself upon the masses and helped to fossilise that 14—16 centuries social order. The Kutb Shahis and Mughals and later Nizams have kept that society in that capsule of depression and dwarfed the growth of their masses into free, self-respecting humanity. The British pursued the same in-human policy in the other princely states and their peoples were also kept blind-folded, incapable of realising, yearning and fighting for the same rights as the peoples of so many democratic countries were coming to enjoy.

If only the Kakatiya nayaks had moved in the direction of parliamentarianism, if only the priests had consecrated all the martial peoples and their associates as being equals to all nayaks as had happened in the later period among the noble order of Sikhs, and helped them to move towards democracy, and if only the village panchayats had not been robbed of their freedoms but helped to accord equal rights to Harijans and others, the Hindus of those days might have been strong enough to persuade or force Muslim invaders to make Dakshinapath a happy, progressive land, capable of marching in step with the outside world.

XIV. POINTERS OF PROGRESS

Religious Tolerance

Those Kakatiya nayak times and later Vijayanagar events proved to be far in advance of what was happening in Europe during that and later centuries, that is, in regard to religious toleration. In England, Germany and France and other parts of Europe, the reformation plunged their peoples into orgies of violence and mutual destruction, witch-hunting and intolerant and mutually exclusive legislation as between Catholics and Protestants. But in Dakshinapath, Basava's Saivism Ramanuja's Vaishnavism, both of *veera* fervour and with their cosmopolitan slant, learnt after a century and a half struggle with orthodoxy, to function in peace side by side with orthodox Hinduism. They grew to be tolerant of the remnants of Buddhists and Jains. They also reconciled themselves to the Shaktaic worship popularised by the Kakatiya nayaks. That atmosphere of religious tolerance proved to be the saving grace of Hinduism in the post-Kakatiya times.

"All religious communities of the Vijayanagar kingdom, including the Jews, Christians and Muslims looked upon the Raya as the guardian of their religious rights and privileges".[1]

Bukka issued an edict, proclaiming that from the standpoint of the state, all religions were equal and entitled to protection and patronage. This edict breathed the spirit of Madhvacharya (1238-1317) who accepted Islam as one of the paths to realisation of God. The agreement avowed by Bahmani Sultan, Mohammad, to spare non-combatants from the penalties and ravages of war was extracted from him by Kapaya and Bukka Raya by appealing to his conscience and innate humanity after all the sufferings caused by his troops to the masses.

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1. "History and Culture of Indian People", Vol. VI (on Delhi Sultanate).

Sultan Mohammad saw how people were horrified by the cruel carnage perpetrated by Muslim forces against non-combatants. He realised the impossibility of ever winning their forbearance, unless he agreed to accept the supermacy of India's heritage of *yuddha dharma* or code of war. So, even Ferishta, the Muslim historian was obliged to record that the "Sultan became repentent and on the pleas of Hindus, he swore that in future he would not put to death a single enemy after victory. From that time, it has been the general custom in the Deccan, to spare the lives of prisoners of war and not shed the blood of an enemy's unarmed subjects" (1364-68).[2]

The Kakatiya people as well as their age were specially unique in having taken pride in avowing their loyalty for several decades to the Empress Rudrama, Queen Ganapamba, so long ago as during the 13th century. The women of that heroic kisan warriors were evidently brave, strong, self-reliant and gloried in their martial traditions. So, when the Delhi and later Bahmani sultans' forces began their depredations and plunderous invasions and indulged in inhuman indignities against prisoners of war peaceful women folk and chidren in the homes, the women of kisan warriors must have also taken to arms in the well-beloved tradition of Empress Rudrama, Four centuries earlier, Reddi Nagamma, daughter of Chowdari Rami Reddi, a village chief, who was also the prime minister after Brahma Nayak, led the Palnad army of Nalagama Raja as against the army of Brahma Nayak and died on the battle-field. Even during the Kakatiya age and while Rudrama was ruling, the famous Brahmin warrior Khadga (sword) Tikkana, the nephew of the sage-poet Tikkana was put to shame by his mother and wife, so the popular ballad song is sung till today in Andhra, because he had come away from the battle-field, when he was faced with far superior enemy forces. He was so stung by being presented with symbols, befitting only a house-wife that he rushed back to the war and died on the battle-field. There were several instances of the performance of *sati* on a mass scale, when their warrior-husbands died as

2. J.D.B. Gribble, op. cit.

martyrs on the battle-fronts on the same scale and in the same inspiring, if blood-curdling contemporaneous Rajput age.

Large numbers of women of such kisan families as had taken to army as their principal approach to society must have especially followed Rudrama's example and trained themselves and their daughters in the science and arms of warfare. The women of panchamas and so many other tribes who followed the Shaktaic cults of worship of Mother were always ready to join the fighting forces, when especially the national freedom and social status of their people were being challenged by the alien invaders.

Some Women used to be hailed as the exemplary founders of families, clans and tribes among the agriculturists as well as rulers in our country. The Satavahanas who succeeded the Mauryas as the rulers of India have thus acclaimed their ancestry from their dear mothers. There were for instance the rulers Pulamayee son of Smt. Vasistri, Yajyasree son of Gautami, Smt. Naganikadevi Gautami Balasree, mother of Gautamiputra Satakarni and Smt. Madhavi, mother of Sakasena. The Kakatiya Nayaks, who felt specially beholden to the inspiration derived from their mothers or wives also exhorted their sons and grandsons to claim their descent from those heroic and wise women. Thus arose the names of clans such as Seelam from Seelama Devi of Rashtrakutas, Lakkam Sani, Kolasani, Chelasani and Pemma Sani.

The Nayaks of Kakatiya and Vijayanagar ages brought into prominence so many famous women, as rulers, leaders, statesmen, heroic mothers and wives. I can only mention a few such outstanding personages; for instance Kota Ganapamba, aunt of Emperess Rudramma, Kota Bayyala Mahadevi, Priya Kotaladevi, Kanaka Mekhala, leading to Kanaka Medala clan, Melamba, Nyayamamba, Chamakamba, Ammanya, Subbamma, Akka Mahadevi, Venkatamba, Melamba Mahadevi Yurjapa of Kalinga Gauri of Gangas, Aryamadevi, Kundamamba of Cholas. Mallamamba and Manchala of Palnad, Suramma, Siddamma, Akkamma, Kunalamma, Hemareddi Mallamma.

It was due to that uplifting and progressive Nayak tradition, that centuries after the fall of Warangal and Vijayanagar regimes Mangamma Nayak of Madura was able to rule over Tamilnad for decades with great distinction. She tried to exemplify the Asokan conception of welfare state, by forming what have come to be known as Mangamma Nayak Avenues, roads, choultries and drinking water tanks from Madura to Kanyakumari.

It is because of such active participation in the successive Kakatiyas' defensive wars waged against invaders and the Nayaks' War of Independence that a large number of kisan clans of the present-day Kammas, Telagas, Reddis or Kapus and even Harijans have come to be known after their warrior-heroines.

The exploits and sacrifices of those Kakatiya women beggar description, their contribution to the success of the Kakatiya defences and consecration of their lives to their beloved God of Agni so as to protect their honour and inviolability of their sacred persons were testified even by most of the Muslim chroniclers whose eyes, hearts and pens had been innured to the then invaders' practice of inhumanity and thoughtless butchery.

Rani Chennamma of Belgaum pargana distinguished herself, in this Kakatiya tradition, by rebelling against British imperialism and welcoming death, rather than living in slavery.

When Gandhiji appealed to Indian women to reinforce our fight for *Swaraj*, hundreds of women of Kakatiya descent responded to Mother India's call.

But such was the unfortunate spirit of exclusiveness prevailing to this day, that the descendants of that inspiring partnership failed to identify themselves with the masses who rendered homage to them in the name of the consecrated nayaks of the 14th century. They were content with whatever religious crumbs of exclusive social status that were offered to

them by the priests and did not mind the relegation of Harijans to untouchability and rank and file of their own followers to the insulting and degrading status of *sudras*. They became deaf to Basava's teachings against casteism and Palnad's comradeship with Harijans. They failed to enliven and energise the later generations and utilise their invaluable heritage to inspire the masses to achieve political freedom from later conquerors and social progress through successive generations.

The religious orthodoxy fought the cosmopolitan social doctrines of Veera Saivism and Veera Vaishnavism and the cult of *dharti mata*, contributed by the Savaras, Marias. They missed the opportunity of making themselves the democratic harbingers of renaissance and reform. They allowed the defeated and dazed Indians to encrust themselves into the neo-orthodox castes and *puranic* taboos and lose the short-lived Palnad and Kakatiya comradeship between all castes, including Harijans. While the invaders were inviting everyone, however lowly, into Islam, the great all-embracing comradeship of heaven for the *ins* and hell for the *outs*, Indian priests turned Bharatiya dharma into an iron-jacket, almost air-tight, and made the masses believe themselves to be low-born and beyond the pale of the holy scriptures. Tulasidas, Surdas, Meera, Nanak in the North and Bhaskara, Potana, Vemulavada Bheema, Vemana in the South toiled hard but in vain to break that capsule.

We have had to wait until the 19th century for social reformers like Veeresalingam, Vivekananda, Shraddhananda, Gandhi, to shake our religious leaders to their roots, infuse fresh air into Indian society and help it to regain her soul and vigorous respiration. It was only by 1933 that Hindu orthodoxy could declare that untouchability is not recognised by or necessary for Hinduism

During that Kakatiya era, Telugu literature gained its second period of progress and tried to incorporate peoples' own idioms, proverbs and popular expressions into its gram-

matical form and lyrical themes.[3] Thus arose the popular literature, on religious and missionary canvass in support of Veera Saivism of Basava's teachings. Telugu poesy inspired by Sanskrit literature made further-progress over the achievements of the great poet Nannaya and Nanne Choda of Eastern Chalukyas. Thanks to the contributions of Tikkana, Bhaskara, Marana, Machana, Baddena and others of the Kakatiya age, translations and adaptations of *purana* and *puranic* stories in Sanskrit were rendered into Telugu. Some of those court poets who were patronised by the mahamandaleswaras developed Telugu prose and helped it to attain a literary stature, through such Saivite publications as *Basava Purana* and other books in *dwipada* and *vachana* and *sataka*. A few Vaishnavite non-Brahmin poets, especially Mayuri Suri, Iswara Suri achieved high distinction.

Even in the realm of statesmanship and political-cum-military leadership, two nayak queens of Kakatiya vintage, Mangamma (1689–1706) and Meenakshi (1732–1739) of Madura nayak kingdom continued the Kakatiya tradition of Rudrama and Ganapamba. If independent India's democracy has come to have for its third prime minister, Indira Gandhi, it is only in tune with the farsighted and liberal political approach to women, initiated with such success by the Kakatiya nayaks.

In yet another direction, nayaks of Palnad, who paved the way for Andhra kisans to achieve regal powers and status and thus dare assume political leadership and build up the Kakatiya—Vijayanagar nayak regal era, by accepting Kannama Nayak as the commander-in-chief of Brahma Nayak's armies, independent India has at last begun to march in that nayak path by calling upon a Harijan minister to head constitution making (Dr. Ambedkar) and another Harijan (Jagjivan Ram) to be its Minister of Defence (1970).

3. Writing about the literary contribution of this age, Puttaparthi Srinivasachari said recently, "Perhaps the best Telugu literature freed from Sanskrit domination is seen only during this (Kakatiya) period. The Kakatiya epoch breaths a rare spirit of purity, individuality and national beauty in Telugu poetry" (quoted from the monthly; "Bharati", May, 1970).

The Saivites took the lead in converting the Jains' initiative into a dynamic campaign to spread literacy in Telugu among all sections of people. Their contributions have been perpetuated by the tradition of Andhras in initiating their children in writing their first words *Om Nama Sivaya* or *Om Namaha Siddhebhya.* It attained much popularity among the general public thanks to the Jangamas and distinguished poets, sages and disciples of the great social revolutionary Basava, like Palakuriki Somanatha, Panditaradhya Marana. The priests, ministers and nayaks, the popular propagandists of Basava and Vaishnava cults and their poets, bards, and kalakshepaks, jangamas, satanis contributed their might in achieving the cultural unity and political strength of the new entity known as Andhra.

Andhraism gained much strength and recognition as a cultural force when Tikkana completed his memorable Andhra adaptation of Mahabharata and when the Emperor Ganapati Deva accorded royal honours to Tikkana on his arrival at Warangal in the manner in which only religious divines and *rishis* were received and acclaimed and when dynamic and saintly missionaries like Somanatha wrote books in *dwipada* style for the people and infusing into the popular mind love of God and lore of the saints. The great poet–scholar Emperor Pratapa Rudra strengthened this movement by his poetic works and patriotic defence of the country and its culture and religious fervour in opposition to Muslim imperialism. How one wishes that those priests acted nobly enough to raise the self-confidence and hopes of all the masses behind those warrior-nayaks and their troops irrespective of caste differences as Brahma Nayak had done in the 12th century or as Guru Govind created Khalsa Order of Sikhs. by declaring them to be as good sardars as the Pandavas of Mahabharata glory. Then they could have paved the way for eventual liberation of all those people from the sense of social depression and gradational caste discriminations from which they are still suffering and are trying to liberate themselves.

Social Welfare

The Muslim invasions, which began from the first decade of the 14th century, weakened the hold of the Hindu kings of

Dakshinapath over their samantas and destroyed their prestige among the people. So, it became too difficult for the village panchayats, guilds of craftsmen and merchants, nayaks. mahamandaleswaras to maintain law and order, keep under control anti-social forces and ensure the safety of pilgrims, traders and tourists along the national highway. The social life of the people was disintegrating. The misery of the masses could better be imagined than described.

The Deccan was specially subject to frequent droughts and famines. Only very specially severe famines came to be mentioned in inscriptions. There were four terrible famines mentioned specially in the inscriptions in 1341, 1377, 1393 and 1396. Incidentally, the year in which butchery of venerable Veera Ballala III by the Madura Sultan took place also witnessed such a bitter famine as had led to widespread cannibalism by the famine-striken people. The twelve-year long terrible famine called *Durga Devi* or the Goddess of Fury began in 1396.

The quickest means of transport of foodgrains then available were the packs of bullocks. When there were, however, large areas which had been famine-striken either because of failure of rains or because the crops were destroyed by the invaders or because so many able-bodied people were either killed or absorbed by armies, groups of highway robbers, profiteering merchants could alone be the products of the unhappy country.

The special concern displayed by the Kakatiya and Vijayanagar-nayaks and rulers for the welfare of the masses and the consequent development of irrigation works stands out in contrast to the cruel process of destruction of villages and devastation of social and economic life of the people, set in motion by the invaders. Nayaks and even their ministers and relatives used to develop these irrigation works and thus hope to perpetuate their family's name by following the example of their rulers. Their passion for building or renovating temples was exceeded by their love of these irrigation works and choultries for the poor. The one relieving feature of the inva-

ders was their abstinence from destroying whatever irrigation works had been available.

The Buddhist tradition of women of not only well-to-do families of nobles, tradesmen and guild-chiefs but also, of so many religious minded women was followed during Kakatiya and Vijayanagar regimes; as is indicated by the inscriptions found in so many places such as Amaravati, Chandole, Chebrolu, Nidubrolu, Chandulur Empress Rudramamba got a number of expansive lakes and tanks constructed for irrigation purposes and many of the Nayaks and their queens followed their excellent example. Similarly her aunt queen Ganapamba Mahadevi daughter of Emperor Ganapetideva constructed a Siva temple and consecrated it in her father's name and endowed village (Chintavada) for its maintenance. She also got constructed Beteswara temple in her husband's memory Beta Nayak in Dharani Kota (Amaravathi) and endowed the village Benadivi for its services. Kodali Laksmi Narayana quotes the following from Marco Poloi's report of his visit to her 40 years' long regime in and around Motupalli Port, which was visited by him.

> " She administered her realm as well as ever her husband had done or better and as the lover of justice, of equity and peace, was more beloved by those of her kingdom than ever was a lady or lord of theirs to honour and uplift women".

The mothers or wives of those Nayaks who distinguished themselves in battles by their valour and leadership or in statesmanshlp during inter-Nayak negotiations and friendly relations or administration used to be hailed as the Mothers deserving of special veneration and so, their successors gloried in hailing their succession from such venerable and queenly women. Thus must have arisen such surnames of Nayaks as Sani Kommu, Nagasani, Chelasani, Kolasani, Pemmasani.

The same tradition continued to be in vogue even centuries later during Vijayanagar regime, so for as the high status of women and their participation in social and

administrative functions are concerned. Prof. Majumdar wrote in his Advanced History of India, "the King of Vijayanagar has also women, who wrestle, and others who are astrologers and soothsayers. He has women who write all the accounts of expenses that are incurred inside the gates, and others whose duty it is to write all the affairs of the kingdom and compare their books with those of the writers outside. Even the wives of the king are well-versed in music. He has judges, as well as bailiffs and watchmen who every night watch the palace, and these are women".

Gribble's[4] tribute to the Hindu kings' welfare-oriented rule as it was found to be at the close of Vijayanagar empire would be generally applicable to conditions prevailing in Kakatiya and Chola times under their Hindu rulers. If there was any difference, it could have been only one of degree of its achievement, not of kind. He observes, "the Hindu kings were always liberal in their expenditure on agricultural and irrigation works. The rivers were all dammed at different places and irrigation channels dug to the rice fields; and where no rivers existed, the whole face of the country was covered with a network of irrigation tanks and reservoirs, some of enormous size, covering many square miles in extent".

At the beginning of this century, when Sir Thomas (then captain) Munro was appointed to settle the districts which had just been ceded after the Mysore war, he describes the country which is situated around the capital, Vijayanagar (the present districts of Bellary, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Kurnool) thus. "To attempt the construction of new tanks is perhaps a more hopeless experiment than the repair of those which have been filled up, for there is scarcely any place where a tank can be made to advantage that has not already been applied to this purpose by the inhabitants. In the sub-division of the Cuddapah district, where the author was for some years the principal revenue officer, there were in an area of 3,574 square miles no less than 4,194 tanks of various sizes. All these public

4. J.D.B. Gribble op. cit.

works were built and maintained by an ingenious revenue system, under which none of the cost of maintenance was borne by the government, except the cost of construction, in the case of larger works. Under this system, called *dasbandham*, a portion of the land irrigated was allotted rent-free on condition of the guarantee, keeping the tank in repair, and in many cases of constructing it. The remainder of the land paid the usual rent to government and in this manner the government, whilst improving the country, added to its own revenues with little additional expenditure."[5]

The feudal system of those centuries made it possible for peace to prevail in villages, as between villages and groups or Nadus and madalams of villages. Poets wrote how it was necessary for people to have a ruler even for every village, in the absence of a panchayat. The following was the plight of villagers and merchants during those periods when the local Nayaks failed to maintain law and order and their regimes were upset and there were periods–either temporary or prolonged–of strife and social and political anarchy.

The following extract from the study made of *South Indian Inscriptions* by Sewell and Aiyangar[6] would indicate how there was so much scope at the beginning of the 13th century for antisocial elements to make life of people in villages and along the national highways and on the sea, very insecure and miserable. Nayaks and adventurers and guild authorities were able to have a merry time. But the common folk must have suffered very much because of the frequent movements of armies of nayaks in their irresponsible and passionate forays against each other very much as desperadoes.

".....If we may judge, what the daily life of the peasant population of South India was by the revelations made in numberless inscriptions in Mysore and the neighbouring districts, it would appear to have been very difficult. For, as soon as anyone became possessed of some sort of wealth by his

5. Cuddapah Manual, p. 10.
6. Robert Sewell and S.K. Aiyangar, op. cit.

breeding of cattle, he was attacked by his neighbours, who united in gangs and proceeded to rob all he had acquired. And not only did these robbers take the cattle, but they were in the habit of sacking the villages and carrying off the young women. We also learn from these records that these crimes were not confined to a man's immediate neighbours, but that fighting was incessant. Groups of villages combined to attack other groups and the inhabitants of a whole *nadu* set forth to rob and slaughter dwellers in another *nadu*. In fact, as it is well known, robbery and murder were elevated into a romance and poems were written describing the bravery and heroism of these savage marauders."

Nor was the sea safe for travel or trade. Marco Polo found that piracy abounded to an immense extent in those seas. To use his own words "from this kingdom of Malabar and from Gujarat there go forth every year more than a hundred corsair vessels..... These pirates stay out the whole summer..... No merchantship can escape them..... When any corsair sights a vessel a signal is made..... and then the whole of them make for this, and seize the merchants and plunder them". Of the Gujarat pirates he says that they are the "most desperate pirates in existenee" and that they and the pirates of Malabar were protected by the local chiefs.

The trade in horses brought by sea to Kayal in those days by Arab dealers and seamen and sold to the leading rajas in South India suffered greatly from these pirates. The western coast of Malabar proper was especially dangerous.

XV. HISTORICITY OF THE TITLE NAYAK AND ITS DERIVATIVES

That the title Nayak was considered sometimes, as being of different connotation from the word 'Raja' is indicated by the name of a general of Kakatiya Ganapati Deva, called "Raja Nayak", as per the inscription of 1236 of Upparapalli in Karimnagar District.

The title Nayak was being used during the Chola, Chalukya regimes. Inscriptions of the earlier Pallavas, Rashtrakutas have also used this title. It seems to have assumed special military significance, besides the earlier civic functions within the Panchayat assemblies, during the Chalukya — Chola — Kakatiya — Vijayanagar — Raya regimes because of the extremely unsettled, and dynastic wars and internecine rivalries. It achieved high honour during the Nayak confederation and the patriotic struggle carried on so successfully by the Nayaks under the great leadership of Prolaya and Kapaya. Though many a Nayak came to be hailed by poets and traditional bards, such as Bhatrajus as Rajas or Rayalu as per Hindu Sastraic fashion the Kamma, Balija, Kapu. Reddi Chiefs preferred to be known as Nayaks, down to the times of Venkatappa Nayak, the last of the Vijayanagar Rayas.

Even after becoming independent rulers, Tirumala Nayak (1623-59) and Mangamma Nayak both of Madura; Raghunatha Nayak and Sevappa Nayak (1541-80) of Tanjore chose to be hailed as Nayaks. According to Kunduri Iswera Dutt the term Reddy was the title of an office of leadership in military terms or civic function, from a village to a group of villages, Nadu or Seema. He also mentions how Kakati Ganapati Deva had a minister called Vemadri Reddi who belonged to Durjaya Clan of Kammas. Some Vysyas, Telagas, Kammas, Boyas and several others held that title or reached that status.

Dr. C.R. Reddi also considered that Reddis, like other Kisans were of aboriginal stock of South Indian agriculturists. Some Kalakars engaged in Carpentry, architecture, earth work, brick-making, smithy, metal works or trade also rose to be leaders of people following rural arts and crafts. They were recognised as Settis or Sreshtis. Some of them took to military profession and rose to be Reddis, Nayudus or Nayaks and a few achieved Nayankarams and were acclaimed as Nayaks of such and such Nadus or Mandalams, enjoying special privileges.

The Nayaks of Natawadi regions, now in Nandigama traced their descent as per local inscriptions of Chagi or Thyagi Pota Raju (1199 A.D.) from Durjaya recognised by the Inscription-writing Brahmins as good as Kshatriya. The names of his four immediate ancestors were clearly kisan — wise or Desi, namely (i) Dora (ii) Pota, his wife Rajambike, possibly from Chalukya or Chola family (iii) Dora, his wife Chammambika (iv) Muppa Durjaya.

Some who could not lay claim to be Nayaks but desiring to indicate their descent from Nayak ancestors have come to add the suffix "Needu or Rayudu" to their names, such as Bapi Needu, Tirupati Rayudu, Sarva Rayudu, Butchi Rayudu. We come across some families among Kammas, Harijans and Telagas whose family surnames are derived from the honorofic title Rayalu.

The Nayaks in general were loyal to the Kakatiya Emperors. But they were not united. The Rajabandhus (Relatives of Rulers) must have been frowing upon the newly promoted Lenkas, who were also called Venkas. The Nayaks who had inherited their Nayankarams and taken part in a few of the many imperial forages against rebellious Nayaka or invasions of Chola or Gajapati regions were possibly not happy over the rise of Lankas. Most of them were eyeing each other more with envy, if not hatred than with feelings of fraternal or castewise brotherhood.

Some Kisan warriors were aiming to rise above Reddy status of being village leaders and achieve the coveted status

of Nayaks and overlordship over Nayankarams. Temptations such as offers of regional leadership, grants for maintaining troops and other preferences over their rivals were all freely extended to over-ambitious leaders by Delhi or other powers. As for instance, the traitor Gannama Nayak was able to entice away such ambitious younger warriors as Bobba Reddy, Butcha Reddy into the camp of Delhi imperialists.

By the alchemy of Indian social atmosphere of welcoming some, excluding some others and ignoring and depressing so many, and the demoralising habit of purchasing or invoking or even poetically coining new contacts with some mythical heroes, new castes or combinations of castes have gone on taking shape, with some semblence of puranic or military or historical respectability for each clan, or even kuduru, i.e. group of families.

Medieval Towns and Villages of South India as viewed by Moscow Historians

Right upto — fourteenth century, "towns, particularly sea-port towns of Southern India enjoyed far-reaching autonomy". There existed merchant guilds that embraced a whole trading area like that of Guilds in Aihole and Penugonda.

Village Community had both a social and political roles : it arranged "its own administration and defences mutual assistance amongst the peasants. A member of village community was a land-owner, and could dispose of his fields, he could bequeath them and was also entitled to sell or purchase land, although in law with permission of the village community. "Fallow lands belonged to the community as a whole," quoted from Moscow's History of India by K. Antonava, etc (1973).

Army and its life

We get an idea of the type of the soldiers engaged in an expeditionary force and their arms and equipment during those Centuries from the following description given by Nuniz, the Protuguese at the time of Krishnadeva Raya :

"All were equally well armed, each after his own fashion, the archers and musqueteers with their quilted tunics, and the shieldmen with their swords and poignards in their girdles; the shields are so large that there is no need for armour to protect the body, which is completely covered; the horses in full clothing and the men with doublets, and weapons in their hands, and on their heads headpieces after the manner of their doublets, quilted with cotton."

"All the Camp was divided into regular streets. Each Captain's division has its market where you found all kinds of meat, such as sheep, goats, pigs, fowls, hares, patridges and other birds and this in great number." The same type of Camp's army life must have obtained in 14th Century, though not so opulently.

"Forest and hill tribes furnished a favourite recruiting-ground for the army, especially in time of war" That is how Boyas or Boyindus had the opportunity to rise to the status of Nayaks in Kakatiya times.

"The roads were often infested by robbers, and any sharp local quarrel or the turbelence of a chieftain might lead to a village being attacked or its cattle being taken away; in such circumstances, the people generally had to defend themselves, and numerous inscriptions attest to the bravery of many village heroes, especially near forests and mountains." (Quoted from *History of South India* by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri : 1976, pp. 314-317).

Part 2

In this second part of the socio-political history of Dakshinapath's war of national independence, led by the Kakatiya nayaks, we attempt to utilise most of the historical facts as the warp and certain facets of social conditions as the waft in weaving our imaginary dialogues to illustrate the national and cultural challenges that faced the south Indian people of the 14th century. A careful study of the first part based on historical facts will enable one to realise the historical background and justification for the imagery presented through these dialogues. Almost all the persons mentioned in these dialogues lived during that epochal period and played their role in that revolution.

This form of presentation of social conditions is chosen to make it more homely and lively, educative and inspiring.

The Confederation of Kakatiya nayaks must have met formally somewhere deep in one of the forests around Srisailam, Nallamalai, Nalgonda. There were certainly rival claimants for its presidentship. The Recherla nayaks, whose ancestors had been closely associated with and allied to the Kakativa rulers from the time of Rudra I, had as good claims for that coveted leadership as Prolaya and his nephew Kapaya, whe were as closely related by heredity to Kakatiya and Viriyala Houses and who were reputed to have been favoured by Pratapa Rudra Deva and his queen.

We are imagining how that historic Assembly of Nayaks must have decided to from their Confederation and chosen Prolaya, in preference to the chief of Recheral House, as the Andhra Rashtra Nayaka.

The Nayaks' Assembly met under the shade of one of the oldest banyan trees spreading out its branches far from the trunk with the support of its *voodas* or subsidiary trunks. All around that wide space of about 10,000 square yards, the carts, carriages, horses, and tents were kept as if to provide protection and serve as an informal, miniature fort.

The lenkas' meeting with poet Bhaskara was held under a nearby margosa tree.

The discussion between Annaya Mantri and Recherala nayaks took place in the Recherala tent.

The meeting with Queen Visalakshi was held in her royal tent.

These discussions are presented in six stages. In the first stage, the Assembly had to be adjourned, in order to facilitate separate discussions (second and third) as between the lenkas and other partisans of Kapaya and Prolaya on one side and Rechela nayaks and their friends on the other. In the fourth stage, the lenkas meet Queen Visalakshi. In the fifth stage, the lenkas discuss with the famous Saivaite saint, poet Bhaskara, the veteran protagonist of Kakatiya dharma. In the sixth stage, the Assembly meets again and takes the final decision in favour of Prolaya, with the wholehearted support of Recherala Nayak and Kapaya.

We have indicated through the footnotes at the relevant places that the horrible and inhuman methods of warfare and cruel ill-treatment meted out to the defeated peoples and their leaders by the Muslim rulers was not the special hallmark of their religious fanaticism and was typical of what was contemporaneously practised by similar semi-civilised warmongers and conquerors.

In course of time, the successors of the Muslim rulers adopted in full or in part, the more civilized Indian code of honour and learnt to treat the people in a less brutal manner even on the battle-fields during and soon after the wars. We have, therefore, indicated how Kapaya and Rayas of Vijayanagar succeeded in forcing the Sultan of Gulbarga to agree not to punish the non-combatants. Ibrahim Kutb Shah, Md Kuli Kutb Shah, Abul Hasan Kutb Shah of Hyderabad and Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan of Mysore became Indian patriots, treated people of all communities alike. Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan fought for the independence of Mysore as full-fledged Indians as against the British and other alien forces.

A. NAYAKS IN A CONFERENCE

All the Assembly rose as sage Vidyaranya and Maharani Visalakshi entered the hall.

Then the sages and Brahmins recited the prayers. All joined in the invocation, uttered by Vidyaranya.

Serve Jana Sukhino Bhavantu
Veera Pratapa Rudra Jayo ho
Karikala Chola Jaya ho
Ganapati Deva Jaya ho

Bendapudi Annaya Mantri: We pay our homage to Queen Visalakshi, sages Vidyaranya, Bhaskara, Annaya Deva.

Dear lenkas, nayaks, samantas, mahasamantas, mantris, mahamantris : We have gathered here today to take important decisions about what we are to do to save our people from the oppression of the Delhi emperor and his Muslim agents and the traitorous Muslim converts and liberate Andra *Desa* and Dakshinapath from slavery.

You all know how our beloved Emperor, Pratapa Rudra Deva was betrayed by the wretched viceroy of Delhi, Malik Maqbul, whom we used to know, in his *purvashrama* as Gannama Nayak and who is now desecrating the *gaddi* which was sanctified by such famous rulers as Rudra, Ganapati, Rudrama and Pratapa Rudra Deva.

You are also aware of the plight of our masses, whose panchayat funds were confiscated, whose brave sons were murdered, whose daughters were dishonoured and whose properties, professions and freedom were disrupted. These Muslims have destroyed our temples, desecrated our idols and looted our people and cut down our gardens and spread havoc all over the country. They have no consideration for our sentiments.

They destroy our temples and forcibly convert our people. Our agriculture is neglected, our irrigation works are broken up, our industries destroyed, our artisans killed or maimed. Wherever they go, there is desolation; whatever beautiful thing they see, they destroy it.

It is true that such misfortunes overtook our people whenever wars took place previously between the kings and their rebellious feudatories and between kings and kings. But then the people were compensated at least in part for their losses according to Bharatiya dharma. Moreover, they never went out of their way to drag the people, beyond the paths and places of battles into the fiery circles of war.

But these Muslim invaders from Delhi and their agents have been taking demoniacal pleasure in spreading far and wide all the mischief of their wars of invasion, forays of plunder and displays of incendiarism, bloodshed and cruel genocide.

They have robbed our accumulated wealth kept in forts and temples, emptied our granaries, imposed heavy taxes, neglected the irrigation system and exposed our people to the horrors of famine and poverty.

I am glad you have all come to attend this meet for concerting measures to offer succour to our suffering masses.

Prince Ammaya Deva : I agree with our elder, Annaya Mantri, that it is high time that we band together and develop an united front to fight these Muslim rulers and liberate our holy land from their imperialism and save our sacred Hindu religion. Never before our forefathers were faced with such a double challenge as we are facing today.

Interruptions from some Lenkas : Yes, we are ready to lay down our lives for saving our religion. But are we to die again for the sake of a prince ? Are we to invite kings who would promote such traitors as Gannama Nayak ? Are we to be the victims of Brahminical order of castes and taboos ?

Ammaya Deva : I have not come here today from my new kingdom (Bastar) which we have carved out in the bosom of Mother Godavari. with the ambition of asking you to enthrone me in Warangal. Indeed, I am content to instal and worship Kakati Mata in my own kingdom, which fortunately is far beyond the evil power of Delhi. I know that every ruling family has its own cycle of growth, stability, decline and fall and the imperial career of Kakatiya House has reached the end, just as the Rashtrakutas, Cholas, Chalukyas, Yadavas had lost their imperial glories. However I am quite prepared to merge my fortunes with those of all the other princely Houses, who had been good enough to stand by my forefathers in their endeavour to protect Bharatiya dharma.

(Kayastha Nayak) Tripurari Deva II : So many of our nayaks appeared to be so trustworthy right up to the moment of the emperor's capture. Many of our brave lenkas are wondering how many of us would continue to be loyal to our new mission. So, we have to go through the fire of purification with the blessings of our *gurus* just as Sita did on her liberation from Ravana's Lanka.

Bolineni Garu (of Kota) : What other process of purification is needed than what we have suffered during these six long years of exile; Vanara's life of fugitives in the forests and survival, despite the bitterest persecution by the conquerors and ever-vigilant and vengeful forces, with their dreadful mission, to capture us, alive or dead, with high prizes placed on our heads ?

Ayya (of Divi) : I agree with Bolineni (of Kota). I am all praise of everyone of you for having withstood every temptation placed in your path by our national enemies. You have undergone indescribable sufferings and made your abodes in hills, forests and lived side by side with wild animals, just like the Pandavas during their *aranyavasa.* You could have sold yourselves for pleasures, palaces and palanquins but you chose to remain true to our dharma. You have cherished your loyalty to our heroic Kakatiya Pratapa Rudra

Deva. The people of Velanadu admire you. Kapaya, our beloved nayak has set an example to all our war-like youths in defying those foreigners. Let us not strengthen the hands of Maliq Maqbul by entertaining any doubts about any of us. It is by God's grace that despite all the offers made by the Delhi Sultan, all the traps laid by his wily viceroy and battles they engaged us in, we have all survived and come here today to place everything that we hold dear and sacred at the altar of our *Dharti Mata* (nation) and Durjaya Karikala Order of Warriors.

Lenka Gonka Reddi (of Muliki Nadu): So many of us, lenkas, have prided ourselves as spiritual sons of Veera Pratapa Rudra Deva. We have won our honours in many a battle. We have hoisted the Varaha banner on the forts of Madura, Kanchi of the South and Dwarasamudram of Hoysalas. We spread Kakatiya regime right up to Orissa. We have also defeated those Muslims in many fights. We have been continuously fighting those imperialists in a guerilla fashion, bowing before fates when these were too overpowering, rising again, once their shadows went past our dominions. We are ever ready to repeat this game of hide and seek, thus preventing the aliens from gaining any permanent foothold in our areas and helping our masses to recover from the damages caused by the enemy. We have heard of the exploits of Kapaya in Velanadu and of Prolaya in the Godavari regions. We know so many of our fellow lenkas have fought even more heroically. We are proud of Pedda Rudra of Nellore (son of Muppidi Nayaka), and Ganda Gopala of Kanchi, who liberated some areas of that ancient Chola kingdom. Can we say the same thing about so many of these great nayaks who enjoyed unique honours in the durbar of our emperor?

Mayideva Lenka (of Konduri sthala): It is true that lenkas have specially distinguished themselves through their heroic resistance to the imperialists. Does that mean that the elders have not made an equally worthy contribution?

Lenka's interruptions: So many mahasamantas have embraced Islam; so many mahamandaleswaras have chosen service

in Delhi's court. Many of our earlier nayaks have come back as Delhi's agents, after embracing Islam and are oppressing us much more than the foreigners.

Peddi Pochiraju : But so many more of our beloved nayaks, samantas, mahamandaleswaras have refused to go that treacherous way, withstood all those temptations, lost their domains and remained loyal to our *dharma* and *Dharti Mata.* All glory to them. I plead for our wholehearted welcome and homage to these venerable elders.

Dachaya Lenka : I wholeheartedly agree with you. I appeal to them not to misunderstand our impetuous lenkas, who are only anxious that we do not harbour any agents or imitators of Gannama Nayak. They are also grateful to our noble nayaks, who have among themselves so many princes of sacrifice and suffering. In one of the battles that I had taken part under the leadership of our beloved Veera Pratap had we enjoyed such sincere and soulful comradeship with our elder leaders as in the battles that we have had to fight, shoulder to shoulder, against these imperialist forces during these years, headed by Yama, (Gannama), the Lord of Destruction, possessed of the evil soul of imperialism. Our peoples' sufferings are becoming unbearable. Our religious practices are banned. We cannot even hail our Gods. We cannot bear this slavery.

Brahmana Boya : I therefore appeal to all our lenkas, nayaks and elder statesmen and samantas to forge an impregnable united front and determine to offer a soulful leadership to us all.

Mantri Gangi Deva : If I read aright the atmosphere of this great gathering, I feel that our prince Ammaya Deva has placed his finger on the right spot of our political atmosphere. He was noble enough—so characteristic of the imperial dignity of Kakatiya Veeras, to say that he would not aim at the leadership of this movement of liberation; while offering all his forces to strengthen our movement.

Since all of us are proud of our filial loyalties towards Kakatiya Order of Emperors and have belonged to the heroic

Order of Lenkas and are as devoted to the great Pratapa Rudra as sons would be attached to their fathers, we must be ready to choose our new leaders and serve and work with them with the same devotion and final loyalty. Let us forget as much of our earlier rivalries and *raja virodha* and entwine ourselves and don the *raksha bandhan* of *raja bandhus*.

Lenkas and Nayaks raise a full-throated pledge : We are all Kakatiyas. We are lenkas bound together in blood of martyrs. We are all nayaks – equal in life, in war, in death. We are the devotees, champions of Bharatiya dharma. We glory in Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. We hail Buddha Deva. We worship Adi Shakti, Kakati Devi. We sacrifice like Shiva. All soldiers are equal before God, *dharma* and *Dharti Mata*.

The three hundred nayaks and the chiefs of 74 nayak families, which had been raised by Pratapa Rudra to the Princely Order and the numerous lenkas then sat down, in the presence of the sages, Brahmin and other (Shaktaic and Saivaite) priests and offered their prayers to Kakati Devi alias *Dharti Mata*, pranams to Veera Pratapa Rudra and constituted themselves into the conference of freedom-fighters.

Maha Pradhani Muppidi Nayaka (of Nellore seema) : I am glad to inform you that much useful spade work has already been done by our dynamic young nayak, Kapaya. He and his band of heroic lenkas have gone and met either the kotwals or nayaks or lenkas operating in or around the forts in the Nellore, Udayagiri, Addanki, Dhanakataka, Chebrolu, Dharani Kota, Kondavidu. Kondapalli, Kolanu and Rajamahendravaram seemas. Sometimes, the fort-kotwals met them secretly in or outside their forts. In some places, they had to engage themselves in brief battles with the kotwals. Sometimes, they could meet only the fugitive nayaks or lenkas or both, in the forests or sand dunes or marshy places (manyams) and spread the message of rebellion and strengthen their fires of freedom. I am proud of their achievements during these trying times, despite the cruel marauding forces of the imperialist agents.

Erra Dacha Lenka (son of Sabbi): Nayaks have also helped us with money, men and horses. We are specially grateful to the villagers and their panchayats for offering their recruits, placing foodgrains and clothes and medicines at our disposal and what is even more important, for harbouring us in secret places, whenever the Muslim forces, who were on our trail were trying to ambush or capture us. So many of us are inclined not to be over enthusiastic about nayaks as such, after what we saw of them, when Veera Pratapa, our noble father was captured. But we have certainly fallen in love with Kapaya and other nayaks of our guerilla bands, because of their genuine spirit of patriotism, love of dharma and passion for our comradeship and sharing the rigours of heroism.

Lenkas began to express their partiality for Kapaya as the best fitted nayak for leadership of their united front.

But some battle-seasoned nayaks were hesitant about this impetuous demand of lenkas.

Dwara Nayanin Garu : (One of the oldest and most respected nayaks, son of Machaya, Nayaka, holding the title of *Kakati Raya Sthapanacharya) :* Many of us are aware of the great acnievemens of Kapaya during these terrible and trying years. We were inspired by his dauntless and incessant marches over hundreds of miles from one seema to another, braving many an obstacle, anyone of which could have claimed his life and certainly swallowed so many lives from among his equally heroic followers. He deserves all praise. He is a big enough warrior to be in the vanguard of us all. But we have also equally important nayaks, especially of the Recherla House, among us, who also deserved to be in the vanguard.

Some lenkas : We honour them ; they might be brave and big enough to lead us. But can they inspire the vast masses, of lenkas, panchayat pramukhs, craft sreshtis, who have been awakened by Kapaya, his nayak and lenka phalanxes ?

Maharaja Ekala Nayak (senadhipathi) : Let us remember that Recherla nayaks have been associated with the Kakatiya

kings from Rudra Deva onwards in an intimate and loyal manner. So many of our rulers have acclaimed them as their protectors. Their loyal associations with Warangal Kakati Devi have been prized by all our people. Numerous bards have sung inspiring songs about their deeds of heroism, achievements on the battle-fields during the wars waged by Ganapati Deva and Rudrama Devi against Yadava, Chola and Pandya forces.

Thikkaya Lenka : When Gannama Nayak wanted them to join the Muslims and the Delhi Sultan offered to reinstate them in their own mahamandalams, one of their elders who was then captive in Delhi wisely excused himself on the ground of old age and preferred to remain in prison. Even when Gannama Nayak got him released and brought him back to Warangal in the hope of his returning to Bhongiri and Recherla to use his influence with the rebel nayaks of his House, the Bhishma declined to go back to his fief. Everyone of the Recherla youthful nayaks has been at war with Warangal Malik. So, we ought to strengthen our united front by inviting these scions of the beloved comrades-in-arms of Kakatiya kings. It would be our proud privilege to be led by them.

Mallideva Mahamandaleswara (Son of Tripurari) : We agree with what all was said about the traditions of loyalty and inspiring achievements of the nayaks, youths and lenkas of Recherla. It would be an honour to invite them into our vanguard. But there are so many equally worthy Houses—like the Korukonda, Kolanu, Dharani Kota, Addanki, Nellore, Ganginenikonda, Dhanakataka, Cheraku, Valluru Pattana, whose nayaks are associated with us and we would all deem it an honour to be led by them in one or the other battle and to join our vanguard.

We are, however, obliged to have the supreme commander over all of us and for all of us. We want him to be the master strategist to guide us over all the battles and lead us over the whole of not only Andhra *Desa* but also Dakshinapath.

Let us consider who among us all would do well to undertake that onerous responsibility.

Cheraku Bollayya Reddi: He should be the nayak who is agreeable to all the warrior clans among our Kammas, the worshippers of labour and *Dharti Mata,* Balijas, Boyas, Reddis, Brahmins and also the sreshtis or senapathis of crafts. The Recherla nayaks, powerful and historically respectable as they are, have been confined to their own mahamandalam, like so many of us. So, their leader has yet to begin to move with us all, learn to lead and gain the confidence of many of us, if not all of us, before he could effectiveiy lead us. We cannot afford to make experiments, nor need we fail to utilise the services of Kapaya, who has already won the confidence of so many nayaks and mahamandaleswaras, established personal contacts with most our ablest warriors, leaders, lenkas and nayaks in different parts of Andhra.

(At this stage, the Assembly adjourned)

II

SPECIAL ASIDE OR *tete–a–tete* DURING THE RECESS, BETWEEN INDULURI ANNAYA (SENIOR NAYAK OF KOLANU, MAHAPRADHANA, WHO HAS MARRIED KAKATIYA RUYYAMA) AND RECHERLA NAYAKS IN THE PRESENCE OF VIDYANATHA

Mummadi Nayak (the oldest of Recherla): Pujya, Annaya, what is your advice? You know how intimately and for how long our House has been connected with that of Kakatiyas. Every one of our nayaks had loyally fought by the side of Kakatiya rulers from the days of Rudra. But for our sacrifices and support, Rudra could not have become independent of Chalukyas of the west and Cholas of Velanadu. Our forefathers fought so hard and carried on guerilla warfare when King Ganapathi and even Queen Rudrama were held captives by the trumphant Yadavas and succeeded in forcing the Yadava kings to release our Kakatiya chiefs.

Now that the Kakatiya House is no more, are we to place ourselves again as mere proteges of Kakatiya, just because he claims blood–royal to flow in his veins? Have we not been enjoying princely status from the Chola times? Did not our

ancestors also share, like the Kakatiyas, the common heritage of Karikala Chola? Are we to allow ourselves to be stampeded by these lenkas, raised to undue importance by Pratapa Rudra?

Annapa: I recognise, like all our nayaks, the unique contributions made by your great family for the protection of the Kakatiya House and for the growth of Kakatiya empire. Who could fail to express gratitude to your ancestors for their contribution to the stability of our Kakatiya empire? I know personally how, but for loyal and patient support of your grandfather and Gangaya Sahini and Jayapa Nayak, Queen Rudrama would have found it extremely difficult to rule during the last 20 years of her regime.

Mummadi Nayak: But Ambadeva, the son of Gangaya Sahini rebelled against Pratapa Rudra Deva. The Ayyas who were attached to Jayapa were also swerving in their loyalty for some time. But my ancestors never faltered in their loyalty.

Annaya: We all know that. We are greatful to your House. But times have changed, as in the past. I wish to remind you how, when King Rudra welcomed your forefathers into equal and honourable partnership, in family, social and political affairs, there were many orthodox and narrow-minded nayaks who resented that progressive move. They only remembered that your forefathers, the Velanati Cholas were worsted in the battles by the Chola kings of Kanchi, their principal source of strength had collapsed. But King Rudra knew that his own Kammas reached their regal status by their inter-marriages with the then ruling Cholas of Velanadu and Chalukyas of Kalyan. So, he wanted to buttress his kingly power by inviting your ancestors into equal and honourable social partnership with his Durjaya House.

Once again times have come to change and so they demand a new approach.

Mummadi Nayak: Are we to give up the new rights of primacy that the priests, have accorded us as Kshatriyas and embrace these Basava's *varna sankara* moves of lenkas propagated by that mad sage Somanatha?

Annaya: We must face the facts of today. Your House has not any chance of recapturing its lost patrimony and regal powers and precedence so long as the Muslims rule over us. Brahmins cannot try to reimpose whatever *varnashrama* we have tried to propagate through *purana kalakshepams*, as the real Bharatiya dharma. Veera Saivism and Veera Vaishnavism have gained supreme hold over the minds of our people through the momentum of *bhakti* ecstacy. Therefore, we have to adjust ourselves to these changing times.

Echa Nayak: What difference is there between lenkas' revolt against *varnashrama* and Muslims' social life? Gannama repeatedly sends his messengers that he, who had studied our puranas-as so few of us had done and to whom *Markandeya purana* was dedicated by Marana, is convinced that in Islam we would find better social status and through the Delhi durbar, we could attain greater power with much greater security.

Annaya. But do you not see the difference between that proferred power under an alien emperor and the co-operative leadership among our people through swaraj; between that unholy Islamic faith and our dharmic social life?

Mummadi Nayak: Of course we do. That is why we have spurned Gannama's offers. We returned the jewelled caps and gold-lined coats of honour sent so squeamishly by Delhi durbar. We would not exchange even this life in exile and this discomfort and risks for us and pains for our womenfolk in this forest life for all the glitter and glamour, proferred by slavery under Delhi's imperialism.

But somehow my blood boils at the thought of being coerced by these loud-mouthed lenkas.

Annaya: I too feel like that, sometimes, when I hear their slogans when I learn about their reckless hobnobbing with the Panchamas, the social outcastes. But on cooler thinking, I realise how the same Panchamas are being raised to high positions by Gannama, after they embrace Islam; how can I nurse any grievance against our own beloved lenkas when they gain Panchama's comradeship in our patriotic war?

Mummadi Nayak : I can find it possible to accept Prolaya as my equal. I can even persuade all my brother nayaks to accept him as our chief but I cannot think of bowing before Kapaya. Prolaya is almost of my age. He was loved by my father, admired by Pratapa Rudra Deva. He rose to be mahamandaleswara and carved out a new kingdom, as it were, all along the banks of the sacred Godavari from out of impenetrable forests. He has won over the war–like and peerless fighters the great Savaras and Boyas for our cause.

Annaya : He is all so wise. He has great regard for our traditions. He loves your House and has much partiality for you. He has always expressed his gratitude to the contributions made to Kakatiya *Rajya Sthapana* by your House.

Echa Nayak. We are keenly conscious of that. In fact, we share warm feelings towards each other I fought in many a battle with him on my side and we have admired his personal courage, proficiency and prowess in the battle-field, leadership over his lenkas and nayaks and forces. We also admire Kapaya as a warrior and leader on the battle-field. But I am afraid he is too ambitious.

Annaya : You are wrong about Kapaya. What appears to be his ambition is his patriotic zeal to liberate our *Dharti Mata* from the alien rule. His impatience is not for personal power. It is only for driving away the Islamic rulers I admit, however, that he has yet to learn that there is much more in our Brahminic dharma than in Basava's cosmopolitanism. If, however, we have to choose between him and Gannama, you too would not hesitate to hail him as your friend, guide and philosopher.

Mummadi Nayak : It is so upsetting to let these Reddis, and Baligas or Balijas so many of them who are only the village munsiffs, to assume equality with all the nayaks of ancient mandalams just because they have enrolled themselves as lenkas. We have nayaks for a number of villages or a strong fort but we have a Reddi for every village and if we allow these Reddis to arrogate for themselves, places of equality among

the Assembly of nayaks they would soon outnumber us all. Moreover, there can be no discipline within the order of Nayankarams.

Annaya : Why, even the chiefs of crafts, say, of weavers, blacksmiths, vaddars, upparas, carpenters, bards, musicians, copper and bronze smiths, oil-mongering and leather-workers are joining the Order of Lenkas and claiming a voice in the Assembly and equal status in our social order.

Echa Nayak : That is the danger. Where would it stop ? How can we maintain our status.

Annaya : But how can we stop this democratic process ? It has been instinct with the broadening of the Order of Lenkas. Reddis of Kondavidu, Addanki, Boyas of Gandikota, Udayagiri have risen to be nayaks by their prowess and achievements.

Vema Nayak : That is why I opposed Veera Pratapa Rudra's decision to throw wide open the door for this Order. At the time of Ganapati Deva, it was the special privilege of only a distinguished hero.

Annaya : But Veera Pratapa Rudra had to find a solution for the much-more difficult shortage of officers and leaders for the army, created by the death of so many heroic nayaks in the repeated Muslim invasions and nearly as many revolts of nayaks, especially of Nellore, Kolanu, Velanadu, Mulikinadu, Valluru Pattana, Kanchi seemas. We ourselves needed, for the protection of our mandalams, so many nayaks. When the youths hailing from the established nayak families were not enough we were obliged to invite the leaders of village panchayats, craft guilds and every able-bodied and heroic youth to volunteer to join our fighting forces. Veera Pratapa Rudra's need was much greater. So, I too had to encourage him to broadbase this Order of Lenkas. Naturally every village gave us a number of lenkas and every Reddi, Balija, Vadde, Uppara, Boya family gave us at least one recruit.

Echa Nayak : I agree, that saved the situation.

Annaya : Naturally we have to be prepared for these consequences After all, who are these people ? Are they

not also as much used to discharging responsible duties, if at a lower level, as the nayaks? Do they not belong to the same Kamma masses, from which all our nayaks and even maha-mandaleswaras have sprung up only a few generations ago? So, it is prudence to accept these changes as inevitable and even good and necessary.

III

LENKAS MEET QUEEN VISALAKSHI

Lenkas : Mother, many of us are keen that you should agree to be the Mother of our Lenka Order and guide us in our struggle for liberation of our sacred land from these Muslim rulers. How long can our people bear with the insults hurled even by the newly converted Muslims at our Gods and religious functions? How can we bear the destruction of our temples, desecration of our *veera puja* functions?

Mother, Queen Rudrama led our people for decades against the enemy forces from the North and South and maintained the integrity of our Andhra kingdom even in the face of the armed opposition of her husband, Chalukya Veera Bhadreswara. Even today, so many of our elders and lenkas ask us what Queen Visalakshi is doing and how she is able to live in seclusion, while our masses are being taxed to death, their crops are being impounded and tank-bunds broken up and orchards destroyed and the countryside turned into a burning ghat.

Kapaya : Mother, we have come to seek your guidance. Everyone is turning to you for leadership.

Visalakshi : Do not the people know that I am a widow, with neither kingdom nor fort nor army?

Immidi Lenka : People reply that Rudrama was also a widow. She was even taken prisoner in war. Yet, she regained her kingdom and developed it into an empire

Visalakshi : But she was trained from her childhood in the art of warfare and statecraft by her noble father, Ganapati Deva. She could lead forces in battles. She did fight like knight templar and when she was held as a prisoner by the Yadava king of Devagiri, she parleyed with him as an equal and settled the peace treaties as a seasoned statesman would do. I have never had such training With all her

experience, war-time prowess and grandeur, she had to lean so heavily on my husband during the last 15 years of her reign. I was brought up as a princess, sheltered from all the troubles of statecraft and kept away from bloodshed and deaths.

Erraya Lenka (body guard) : We do not want you to join us in waging wars. We want you to guide us in matters of statecraft. we are too young and inexperienced. So many of these nayaks are crafty and conservative. It is because of their mutual rivalries and ambitions, that our noble Pratapa Rudra suffered so much weakness in imperial councils and on the battle-field. We want you to guide us as to whom we should choose as our overall leader.

Visalakshi : I know so little. I have never ventured to rule conjointly with the emperor. My husband did not give me much opportunity to meet, know and understand the minds, activities and schemes of most of these nayaks. I have tried to learn from my deep study of sage Tikkana's *Mahabharata* and Vidyanatha's *Neeti Sastra Muktavali.* I am devoted to sage Somanatha and his writings. So, I know more about devotion to duty than about statesmanship. I could only read but not fully comprehend the *Purushardha saram* by our guru, Siva Devayya and my husband's great book *Nitisara.*

Rudraya Lenka : But we have heard that the venerable Annaya Mantri, saint Somanatha and Prolaya used to visit you often, discuss matters of state and gain much from your thoughts. The emperor must have been sharing his thoughts with you and explained his *Nitisara* with all his experiences. You were always with him during his tours and *Digvijaya yatras*, and you were present at most of the conferences held by the king You have known personally most of the great nayaks and they were honoured by you, whenever they achieved great victories. Mother, please give us the benefit of your experiences and wisdom. You can guide us like Kunti Devi. You can inspire us like Draupadi Devi.

Visalakshi : What is it you want me to do now? I am glad to learn that you and your leader Kapaya have been

moving from one end of our kingdom to the other with lightning speed. As you reach the neighbourhood or boundaries of any mandalam, I am told, enthusiastic groups of people flock round you, offer you much more than you need in the shape of food, clothing, weaponry and cash. I am happy to hear that there is much welcome to your forces.

Pochu Lenka : Mother, say 'our forces'. We are all your forces. We know only you and Veera Pratapa as our real Godly parents. We want you to place yourself at our head. We wish that you should ride as our vanguard and as our presiding deity when we march into the Assembly of nayaks and lenkas.

Visalakshi : Does Kapaya agree with this suggestion? I am sure he is stateman enough not to agree. I see, he does not approve of it.

It will be unwise to let the great nayaks think that I belong to you alone. I belonged to all, the old and the young, the nayaks and lenkas, the priests and pundits, the people at large, including tribal people, guilds and the poor Panchamas. Let me continue to cherish that universality of my contacts with our people. In that way, I can help you, my beloved lenkas, more fully and easily.

Kapaya : Our beloved Queen has uttered words of great wisdom. We know her heart is more fully with us, though she loves all others. Let us enjoy this special privilege of coming to her more freely to seek her guidance, whenever we are in doubt or trouble.

Ammu Lenka (of Hanumakonda): Mother, the nayaks have been unable to decide upon anyone of them to be their supreme leader In the past, a king or an emperor used to impose his seniority or superiority over them by actual display of his overall supremacy in wars and might of power in money, men and nayaks. Now that none of them has yet regained a secure hold over mandalams or mahamandalams, they are jealous of each other in their imagined importance. We know your blessings are available to our leaders Kapaya and Prolaya. But those elders are jealous of them.

Gata Maddena Boya : We can avail ourselves of the special qualities of dynamism, initiative, courage, missionary zeal and passionate love of our country, possessed by these twin leaders in such abundance, if only you agree to be the supreme leader of all nayaks and lenkas.

Visalakshi : You do not realise what you are asking for My grandmother, Rudrama used to tell me repeatedly how specially difficult it was even for such a strong-willed and experienced warrior-statesman as herself to keep her counsellors and nayaks in mutually co-operative atmosphere — a task which was made immensely more trying and heart-breaking for a woman than for a man like her father, Ganapati Deva, or her grandson, Pratapa Rudra. Even her husband was jealous of her supremacy in councils of state. Most of her relatives, more especially some of her aunts and queenly matrons were busy only in countering her moves made for the good of the state. Therefore, do not ask me to shoulder any such impossible burden. I can help you so much more easily and effectively by being the non-political mother for all of you. I am sure, Kapaya understands the significance of my advice.

Peddu Rudra Lenka (of Nellore) : Mother, is it not true that our beloved Veera Pratapa Rudra has specially signified that of all the loyal nayaks who have escaped capture by the Mohammadans, and who have refused to accept the new rulers and who have preferred to go into exile and unfurl the banner of rebellion, Prolaya would make the best leader for us all ?

Visalakshi : Why do you put this question to me ? My husband has sent his insignias and special messages of encouragement to more than one great nayak. What do they all say ? Is it not true that a few have not yet responded to his call, because of the temptations offered by Gannama Nayak ? So, it will be better for the loyal nayaks to decide upon their leader, independently of my husband's special choice, made when he was a captive and without the aid of all his counsellors and nayaks

Cheraku Jagaddalu Annayya Reddi : Mother, we know that if our beloved Veera Pratapa Rudra could come into our

midst, he could certainly breathe into our ears, the secret that today is harboured in our heart and in that of the favoured few nayaks; we are convinced that at the core of that secret message of our spiritual father, there are the indelible pictures of our peerless leaders, Prolaya and Kapaya.

Visalakshi. Why do you try to pry into my heart and trouble my conscience. I know I am powerless to implement or enforce my husband's wish. Any suspicion or whisper that these two beloved relatives of ours are aiming at the supreme leadership would only destroy whatever chances you may have and your combined sacrifices and leadership would deserve, for commending yourselves to the wholehearted acceptance by the whole Assembly. Remember, every day of delay in choosing your leader is costing very much in men, money, honour and dharma for our masses.

Kapaya: Mother, I have come to know, from secret sources, that a few among the nayaks who received Veera Pratapa Rudra's messages, are not over-enthusiastic to hail Prolaya as their chief, because the emperor has achieved *Swargarohan* and they are jealous of our blood-relationship with your imperial family. After all, these are times, when anyone can achieve any status, by the might of his arms, by the skill of his politics or by the wretchedness of his treachery like Gannama Nayak. Since we are so intimately related to you, I agree with you that you should not do anything which may be misunderstood as being partial or narrow-minded.

IV

Consultations between Somanatha and Lenkas —Kapaya's decision

Somanatha: Dear Lenkas, I congratulate you on your meteoric achievements during the past six years of widowhood of our beloved land, after the *swargarohan* of our Veera Pratapa Rudra.

You have imbibed the spirit of Veera Basava, who has inaugurated social and religious revolution in Dakshinapath. You have been trying to fashion yourself after the Basava's teachings about the qualities of a true *bhakta*. There should be no caste or clan difference, no high or low mandaleswara House and none should try to distinguish himself from other except by his sacrifices and services and never on the ground of his so-called high birth. Such is the faith of true *bhaktas*. They alone can be real lenkas. I have no patience with our purohits and *purana kalakshepaks*, who harp upon the anti-diluvian and non-Dakshinapath *varnashram*, based upon the non-existent *chatur varna* or four castes. Dakshinapath's social life is based upon the near-democratic clans and tribes which have come down to us from pre-Brahminic times. All the people of all these clans and tribes are equal by birth and occupation; only some are big, great or noble because of their personal achievements and contributions to society. In Buddhist times, all our agriculturists were known as *kashtakars*, *kutumbins* or *kammas*. All these nayaks have risen from the noble masses who are the real devotees of *Dharti Mata*.

Marana: But there are the puranas, which have enjoined upon us to respect the traditional achievement of our elders who received the blessings of Gods in return for their *tapas*. After all, some people rise above others by virtue of their deeds and *tapas*. A son inherits the fruits of the virtues of his father. I have no objection to our lenkas also rising to be nayaks and becoming princes. Such is the message of puranas.

Somanatha : We have great respect for our learned poet Marana. But puranas offer no sure guidance to anyone's proper discharge of dharma. Their teachings must be taken with a pinch of salt. Let Marana say if the traitor Malik Maqbul derived his inspiration for his deeds from those Gods who presided over the dedication of *Markandeya purana?* Are good virtues, noble activities, the monopoly of people of high birth? If so, why have so many nayaks of princely houses, even including those of blood-relationship with our noble Veera Pratapa Rudra betrayed our dharma and joined forces with that traitor?

Marana : I agree that we should give due weight to the aspirations of the youths hailing from every cadre of society. Even the Panch imas were able to contribute Kannama Nayak to the famous Palnad battle and he was hailed as the commander-in-chief by no less a leader than Brahma Nayak. The daughter of a Reddi (chief) of a village, Nagamba rose to be the minister of Nalagama Raja. Even now, so many of the Reddis, who belong to the peasant class of Kammas are joining us as lenkas in such large numbers and distinguishing themselves as patriotic leaders. Who were so many of these Recherla Kakatiya nayaks? They are the scions of intermarriages between the ascendant Kammas and Cholas and Chalukyas who were losing their imperial power and receding into their homelands in the South and West.

Somanatha : Look at the Muslims. Why are they triumphing over us so repeatedly? Why is it that they came in such small numbers, gained recruits from our masses at the lowest rung of social status and became so powerful? Do our pundits examine how much moral and material strength these foreigners are gaining because, among them there are no such distinctions as we have been cursed with and that once one embraces Islam, one becomes entitled to all privileges and promotions, equal to what are available to their princes and nayaks? Basava desired our Hindus also to live in such a democratic and egalitarian manner.

Adventurers came from all lands in central and western Asia and Africa and joined their ranks. We learn that even

those who were brought in as slaves were allowed to rise by their prowess to be their emperors. We talk of *varnashrama*. Where is any colour difference among Muslims? African blacks and Turkish beauties, Arabian slaves and Persian damsels intermarry and prosper. That is why they are conquering us. Our own social weaknesses are our real enemies.

I am the oldest. I have grown sick of these orthodox reactionaries. I want to see Hindus, freed from these debilitating, divisive caste, class, tribal quarrels and blood-baths.

Several Nayaks, especially Immidi, Annaya, Brahmana Boyudu: We want to embrace Saivism We wish to become Shiva Bhaktas.

Marana: Saint Somanatha is the true messenger of God. He has not come to us all the way from Dwarasamudram of Veera Ballala to ask us to merely change our religious faiths. He wants us to become devoted *Bhaktas* of *Dharti Mata* and dharma. Today we want patriots, not *bhaktas* of this or that God. We have several Gods but we must learn to love one sure God, whom we can touch, that is our *Dharti Mata*. Somanatha has written so many books of poems and prose in such easy style and with such popular steps not because he is not as great a Sanskrit scholar as so many of us but because he has desired to educate the masses. He never liked our orthodox scholars' morbid habit of keeping the masses in ignorance and confining the fruits of scholarship and message of our saints and scholars to the upper classes. His passion for this Order of Lenkas is in line with his passion for social equality and religious fervour as the sure and sacred ladder for the rise of our masses. I have become his special devotee after what I have seen of the mischief done by my former patron, Gannama Nayak. That is why I have joined your Order and begged the venerable Somanatha to come back to us, at least for a while to give us his message.

Somanatha: I am thankful to our great scholar–philosopher Marana for his love for me and for his inspiring offer of joining the Order of Lenkas. That augurs well for the new move of our Kapaya and his followers. Let us learn the simple lesson that every lenka must be regarded by every other

lenka as his equal, irrespective of his birth or wealth or learning. A lenka is dearer and nearer to one than a king or a prince or a priest. Lenka must be prepared to sacrifice his all for his dharma Life is worth nothing if it cannot honour and worship fellow lenkas. If we accept this simple code of conduct, I can assure you, victory will be ours and we need not fear the fetters or favours or fortunes of these foreign masters.

Telugu Bijjala Lenka (Chola) : Then why should we continue to call ourselves as the spiritual sons of Pratapa Rudra Deva?

Marana . Because he has lived the life of an ideal lenka of our dharma.

Somanatha : Yes, Veera Pratapa Rudra truly deserves to be our ideal. He was a savant. He was a poet. He was so great a warrior. He was generous to the defeated opponents. He was a stern but just master to those who fought him but eventually accepted defeat in the battle. He treated all alike. Indeed, it was he who infused so much of the spirit of Basava into this great Order of Lenkas and thus invited the oldest nayaks, proudest princes to become Lenkas and thus inspire the youths to aspire to become the greatest warriors and stoutest champions of our dharma.

Rudra Deva, Racha Rudra Deva (sons of Bollaya Reddi) · Why should we not then choose one of our young lenkas, for instance, Kapaya, as our foremost nayak?

Brahmana Boyudu (son of Hari Deva) . All our Boyas are devoted to Kapaya.

Somanatha : Yes, Kapaya has already become the most prominent and popular nayak, by virtue of his sacrifices, dynamic initiatives and invincible leadership. He is a true scion of Durjaya clan. But our lenkas have to be patient and wait until they win the general approbation of most of the old nayaks, powerful Houses of great influence and inspiring traditions.

Kapaya Nayak : Guru Somanathajee's advice is most valuable and timely. We will weaken our movement and sow seeds of discord, if we insist upon leadership to be accorded

to this nascent Order or Lenkas. Let me lead the way to all of us by myself offering the first sacrifice, befitting an ideal lenka or Basava I do not want the supreme leadership. I want only to be an exemplary lenka. Let us all offer our supreme sacrifices in order that our people would get the most acceptable leadership. Let us remember that Veera Pratapa Rudra has sent his special message to so many of our venerable nayaks, especially Prolaya. It is because of the blessings and active support of Prolaya that I have ventured to take this initiative and it is because of his great influence, borne out of his farsighted ramifications of marriage alliances and religious and social comraderie developed by him among so many nayaks and rulers in Dakshinapath that our mission has reached this power and influence. Therefore, we have to be patient and move among all these highly sensitive and proud nayaks and pundits, with the guidance of Prolaya Nayak.

V

(ASSEMBLY SESSION RESUMED)

After the Assembly re-assembled, Echa Nayak of Recharla got up and offered to work with and under the leadership of Kapaya, subject to certain conditions:

Echa Nayak: When Veera Pratapa Rudra Deva was alive, members of our House considered themselves like our fore-father, as the foremost lenkas of Kakatiyas and the emperors were good enough to shower special honours upon our House. Many nayaks used to consider our House to be as good as the mini-imperial House. We are also conscious of the jealousy which this special treatment has engendered in the hearts of many other nayaks and their Houses. We have felt in our hearts of hearts that possibly many a nayak betrayed us all because of that envy felt by them towards us. Therefore, we have been feeling that some sacrifice would have to be made by us, if the new united front that we are trying to forge is not to be weakened by the prolongation of that jealousy towards our House and its nayaks and lenkas. We are prepared not to stand in the way of this conference of patriots and upholders of dharma, if someone else is chosen as the leader. But we are anxious that none of us should be chosen as the new ruler; that is, we do not want another king to be installed over us. The institution of a king or an emperor, holding sway over us all would, on the other hand, upset not only the cherished feelings of our House but also those of many other Houses, which had attempted to achieve their independent kingdoms at one time or other but which came to be content to bow before Kakatiya emperors. Now that the Kakatiya supremacy is gone, let us not create another in its place and over us all.

Kapaya: I have kept my silence all this time not because I wanted to win leadership over all of you or precedence over such ancient House as Recharla of matchless loyalty to our Kakatiya ruler or of Gangaya Sahinis of *Gandapendera* heritage

or Mummadi Nayak of Nellore, but because I wished to gauge the depth of the urge of our fellow nayaks and lenkas for unity and self-sacrifice to fight the Muslim forces

It is not quite correct to say that my comrades and I were solely or mostly responsible for contacting all the freedom-loving nayaks and for mobilising most of the rebels and revolutionaries as a preparation for this great Assembly. All the time, I had the blessings and active advice of my uncle, Prolaya. Besides being related by blood to Veera Pratapa Rudra Deva, he has gained as much experience in actual warfare as the ablest of us all and participated in as many battles and gained possibly more trophies than any other nayak of middle age. He mobilised all the nayaks controlling either directly or indirectly the areas in or around Korukonda, Rajamahendravaram, Kolanu, Kaulas, south Godavari coast and has quietly prepared more than half of Andhra for revolt. It was on his advice and with his authority, I was able to contact all the nayaks of Andhra. When I reported that the Velanadu nayaks also were ready to join forces with Prolaya's allies of the north-west, it was Prolaya who approached the venerable Brahmin mantris who were also nayaks in their own martial right and won their blessings for our further moves.

Annaya Mantri: I think it is just the right occasion for me, an elder, to give you all certain facts which are known only to some of you. Some of the Brahmins, felt very much ashamed that one of us, whom we looked upon as the ablest, went over to the enemy, embraced Islam and accepted service in Delhi court. So, they wanted to do their best, more as the custodians of Bharatiya lore, culture and dharma than as nayaks to rouse our people to their responsibilities towards our dharma and *Dharti Mata.* We were aghast at finding so many nayaks returning into private life, others turning into exile, while so many others were carrying on bravely their guerilla warfare and suffering unlimited miseries, all without any contact with one another. Then we learnt that Prolaya of Durjaya fame, Vema of Recherla, Kapaya of Musunuru, Erra and Nalla Nayaks, Prolaya Vema of Addanki and many others received special messages from Emperor Veera Pratapa Rudra. We approached Prolaya as well as other great nayaks

who rose from Lenka Order. They responded to our call to strike for freedom. We found that Prolaya had already achieved much on his own initiative and with the active co-operation of Kapaya in winning the co-operation of not only so many nayaks in Kolanu, Kammanadu, Velanadu and Telangana, but also in the Pakanadu, Korivi seemas. He was already in contact with the venerable sage Vidyaranya, who, we are glad, is present among us today. They both used their influence with our fellow nayaks of Kampili. At that crucial stage, Kapaya made his swift march across the country, and met the nayaks of Korivi seema, Harihara and Bukka Raya of Kampili after their return from Delhi and Veera Ballala III of Dwarasamudram and impressed them with the chances of sure success of their revolt, if only all of them would strike in a concerted manner. The final stroke that settled their minds and finalised their plans was the spirited message sent by Prolaya, in whose mature judgment they had great faith.

Tripurari (of Ganginenikonda): Even then, we could not be confident of success, unless we knew that the Mohammadan governors, stationed in Malabar and Madura would not be able to march on us and the venerable Veera Ballala III of Hoysalas would simultaneously be willing to strike against the Muslims to his west and east. Moreover, Veera Ballala, who had been at war with the nayaks of Warangal and Kampili off and on, would have to agree to let alone Kampili and honour the no-war agreement. How are these objectives to be achieved? We knew that Prolaya was related to Veera Ballala and he was responsible for achieving an understanding between Veera Pratapa Rudra and Ballala and that there prevailed mutual trust and respect between them. So, we joined forces with Kapaya, in begging grand old Ballala to agree to live in peace with Kampili, as an independent kingdom. We were emboldened and encouraged to find Ballala already busying himself with similar moves. You can see, how Prolaya has proved to be the lynchpin to our plans in the west. It was only after that, we have made bold to convene this great Assembly.

Erra Dacha (of Recherla): I think it is my duty to offer our thanks to the silent, strong, saintly Prolaya, my brother nayak. He is younger in age but wiser in statesmanship. He

is as great a warrior as the best of us He is as much a lenka as any of us and carries in him the beloved blood of Kakatiyas, perhaps much more directly. I hail him as the first among us, who are bound together much more spiritually than mere blood-brotherhood could ever hope to achieve.

Vidyaranya: This is indeed a great day in the annals of Dakshinapath. My heart is gladdened to find that you are all actuated by noble sentiments, patriotic fervour and selfless loyalty to Bharatiya dharma. I am sure the reports of your deliberations will ennoble the masses of our lands and inspire their warriors. I can assure you that Gods, Varaha and Narasimha, will bless you with success. Harihara and Bukka Raya, Veera Ballala will stand by you I feel confident that we will be able to instal Bhuvaneswari—*Dharti Mata*—at the new city of victory, Vijayanagar, we dream of constructing on the banks of Tungabhadra—the daughter of our sacred river Krishna—to couple with Kakati Devi, our *Dharti Mata*. Let us all help Kapaya to capture and protect Warangal, the city of our hearts and build Vijayanagar, our second capital.

Then many lenkas and nayaks requested Prolaya to speak.

Prolaya Nayak: My heart is too full of happiness at this great consummation of my dreams–this Grand Assembly of all the renowned warriors and self-sacrificing patriots and upholders of our most precious dharma in the presence of our beloved queen Visalakshi. I only wanted that this Assembly should create the much-needed atmosphere of unity, mutual loyalty and discipline, so that we can plan and launch a concerted and successful offensive against the imperialists. I never wanted our nayaks to give up their traditional rights and responsibilities of their nayankarams. I did desire that we should take a vow never to war against each other in our traditional but suicidal habit of trying to encroach upon each other's domains. I have seen how the kings weakened our country and destroyed so many of our people by their mad passion to become emperors and how no emperor ever succeeded in developing social economy of his people, because of his preoccupation with the maintenance of order between the

rival kings or mahamandaleswaras. I have come to admire the patience and industry of our masses. I realise now, more than ever, how they have been neglected by our nayaks and kings. We do not deserve to be their rulers unless we learn to love them and help them to prosper and live a free, happy and dharmic life. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that dharma should be enthroned as our invisible emperor or chakravarthi and there should be no one superior leader overawing every other, and all our nayaks should be equal to each other and just and peaceful towards one another. So, I hail the general consensus of this Assembly that we should not set up any king over us all, we should not war against each other and if anyone breaks this vow, our leader should be helped to take police action; that we should be united in our equality and we should avow our loyalty to dharma and our people. Let us learn from our enemies, as to how to die in defence of our dharma just as they die to spread their intolerant cult.

Annaya Mantri: We all appreciate the statesmanlike advice of our well-beloved Prolaya. We realise the key-role played by him so silently and so effectively. We also admire the dynamic and catalytic achievements of Kapaya and his colleagues and the generous offer of co-operation and comradeship, made by the chief of the famous House of Recherla. We are all in favour of equality among our nayaks, whether they are related to Kakatiyas by blood or by Lenka Order, whether their nayankarams are small or big or bigger yet. We do need a leader for us all, just as we must have a leader in every battle. It is for want of such a leader in any battle and because various batallions were fighting independently with little or no co-ordination with other batallions led by different nayaks, we have suffered so many defeats and lost chances of attaining victories, just when they seemed to be within our reach. Let us learn from the bitter experiences we have had in our wars with the Muslims.

Nalla Dacha Nayak (of Recherla): I propose that we choose Prolaya as our *adyaksha* or president. He is eminently fitted to be the chief of all the nayaks of Andhra. In that capacity, he can further strengthen our friendly relations and political alliances with our neighbouring kings of Kampili

and Hoysala to whom he is also related. This ancient title of *adhyaksha* has been reserved for the ablest mantris, and Prolaya would prove to be the wisest friend and guide to us all. I am satisfied that all the lenkas and nayaks of my House would be happy to offer our co-operation and comradeship to this chief of our chiefs.

Ayya : May I then propose that we hail Prolaya as *Andhra Rashtra Adyaksha?* (There was universal acclamation.)

All present in the Assembly hailed Prolaya as *Andhra Rashtra Adyaksha.* Some nayaks and lenkas wanted Kapaya to be hailed as *upadyaksha.*

Kapaya : I hail your decision. We are all happy that the ablest statesman among us, Prolaya Nayak, is accepted by all of us enthusiastically, as our chief. This is a demonstration of unity, which presages complete victory to our cause. I find fulfilment for myself and my companions who have worked towards this consummation. We are content to work by your side, fight hand in hand under the orders of whomsoever you choose as the leader of any battle. I sincerely hope that we will plan, work, fight and win as per our combined wisdom but under the guidance and overall leadership of Prolaya.

Veera Balija Sreshti (wearing the title of Ballala Raja Mardhana) : Now that we have come to this truly patriotic and progressive decision to form the Andhra Nayak-cum-Lenka Confederation and to invite Prolaya Nayak to be its *Adyaksha,* let us consecrate our new institutions with the blessings of our elders, Videmu and Kommaya, the famous agriculturists of Srisailam and create a political and constitutional sanction for our great Confederation and noble leader.

Nagayanu Lenka Boyudu (son of Harideva) : We support this suggestion. We need a supreme leader to keep order among leaders and to work for the welfare of the people.

Videmu and Kommaya : Rose and invoked the blessings of *Dharti Mata* for Prolaya.

Annaya : Yes, this prayer by our best agriculturists is a good augury. We are fortunate to have among us the noble Queen, Visalakshi. She represents all the best in our culture

and Kakatiya House. She has imbibed the spirit and wisdom of Pujya Rudrama and gained so much political experience from Veera Pratapa Rudra and known us all so well and loved us so much, She has become even more dear to us as she has bravely shared our miseries and marched with us into exile under our *swatantrabavuta*. We see reflected in her, century-old wisdom, courage, social freedom and progressive spirit for which the Kakatiyas are responsible and famous. Queen Visalakshi is indeed the visible embodiment of the celestial spirit and benevolent wisdom of our Kakati Devi. I appeal to her to offer us her blessings.

Then Queen Visalakshi got up, amidst acclamations from all quarters, and held up the famous sword of the Kakatiya rulers and kissed its handle and the sharp edge.

Then Prolaya Nayak advanced towards her, bowed his head and both her palms were placed on his head and she blessed him as the leader of all Andhras.

Visalakshi : I am grateful to the elder statesman, nayaks, lenkas, shreni sreshtis and gurus and purohits for having gathered here today and made this historic choice of our *adhyaksha*. During all these years, my sorrow knew no bounds, because of the triple blows fate has heaped upon me. Veera Pratapa Rudra, my beloved Swami, your exemplary *veera* passed away under such poignant circumstances, weighted down as he was by the thought of our defeat and betrayal at the hands of one of his favourite nayaks Gannama and one of the renowned Brahmin ministers, Jagannatha. Ever since, so many of our proud nayaks and heroic lenkas have sacrificed their all in the numerous guerilla battles waged against the imperial enemies. But what has specially pained me was the failure of our nayaks and lenkas to come together and offer an united opposition to the Delhi forces. Every day was witnessing the butchery of our *bhaktas* as they were going on their pilgrimages to Pandaripura, Srisailam and Rameswaram, the destruction of our temples and dishonouring of our women.

At long last, we have formed our united front. We have achieved the most difficult task–the choice of our *adhyaksha*. I have been blessed with a stout heart but even my heart used

to quail as I got news of the enemies' successes, not so much in battle or skirmishes as in enticing away more and more nayaks, pundits and even some lenkas. Betrayal seemed to be the worst blow that any weak man could hurl at us.

This is the moment of achievement; this is the declaration for which the soul of our Pratapa Rudra has been waiting, as anxiously as myself Now, I feel as if his soul has come to me once again and a sense of fulfilment fills my heart. Fortified as I am with the reincarnated soul of my Swami, I bless our beloved lenkas and wish you all to become the upholders of dharma, protectors of our people and *Dharti Mata.*

B VINAYAK DEV

Vinayak Dev and the armies of nayaks were defeated, the fort of Velumpattan was captured, Vinayak Dev and several of his nayaks were taken as prisoners in 1362. They were produced before the victorious Mohammad Shah, the ruler of Gulbarga. All those unfortunate nayaks know that they could expect no mercy from the conqueror. Vinayak Dev had defeated the Bahmani forces once before and inflicted heavy losses on them. So, Vinayak Dev had made up his mind to receive whatever treatment that the less-civilised invaders were accustomed to mete out to their prisoners of war. He was only sorry that he could not die in the battle-field.

What must have transpired, between the valorous princely prisoners and the fortunate victor and also as between the venerable Prince Ballala and the Sultan is being put here in a dramatic form in the light of the then prevailing circumstances and cultural standards.

Sultan Mohammad Shah : Vinayak Dev, you are so young, we recognise your prowess. You are so good an organiser. We respect your high qualities of leadership. That is why we have been anxious to win you over as the friend of Bahmani. But you and your father are so perverse. You persist in your enemity towards us. So, what shall we do with you?

Vinayak Dev : Sultan, why all these compliments if only to accuse me and my father as being perverse enemies for no reason. Did we take arms against you and your father, Ala-ud-Din, without provocation and justification?

Sultan : Then why did you indulge in so many provocations?

Vinayak Dev : What provocations?

Sultan : Did you not obstruct the passage of horses from Cannanore and other sea-ports to our capital? Have you not refused to let the Arab traders and their horses come to us in the traditional manner through your territories?

Vinayak Dev : Do you expect us to let the traders and horses to go to you when we know that they were to be used against us ?

Sultan : Why should you assume that we would use the horses against you ? Have we not concluded a treaty of non-aggression with you after the last war ?

Vinayak Dev : As if we can trust your treaties and words of honour ?

Sultan . How dare you say that ?

Vinayak Dev : What else are we to feel, in the light of your father's treatment towards my father ? Did not my father aid your father in his struggle against the Delhi Sultan ? Was it not because of that help, your father and his Turkish sardars were able to repel Delhi's invasion ? What gratitude have you (father and son) both displayed towards my father ? Has not your father invaded the Andhra kingdom without any provocation whatsoever, even after having become Sultan, because of my father's help ?

Sultan : As if your father had any choice ! Was not the Delhi Sultan opposed to Warangal ? Your father helped my father only in his own interest.

Vinayak Dev : Such is your barbaric conception of what friends do to each other ! Supposing my father had attacked your father's forces from Andhra just when Delhi forces were invading Bahmani kingdom from the north. That was the advice given to my father by so many of our nayaks and youthful warriors. Would there have been a Bahmani Sultan to speak to me in this manner ?

Sultan : In that case, even Warangal would have been destroyed ?

Vinayak Dev : Possibly that might have happened. In that case, we would not have been any worse than what has now happened. At least we would have had the satisfaction that Bahmani kingdom also was in the same grave yard as Kakatiya kingdom.

Sultan : Then why did your father help us ?

Vinayak Dev · In the hope that your father would behave in a civilized and grateful manner. But then you had no better standards than those of the highway robbers.

Sultan : Don't be so reckless and indulge in such hauteur.

Vinayak Dev : What fears have I of the truth ?

Sultan : Anyhow, your father was wise enough to recognise our right to be the Sultan. He was a statesman and so he joined us in keeping away the Delhi Sultan from the Deccan. Then he was also sensible and concluded a treaty with us when he found that we were getting the upper hand during the invasion and paid us the war-indemnity of 30 lakhs of rupees and given us such valuable presents.

Vinayak Dev: We agree to that not because you had defeated us or we were unable to force you to give up your unjust seize but because we wanted to save our people from your barbaric depredations, because your foreign forces would not respect *our age-long civilized ways of dharma,* because your troops were let loose on our villages which destroyed our people, their crops, dishonoured our temples and women, and because your forces were not armies but only looters, your chiefs were not leaders but only highway robbers.*

Sultan: You are wrong. Why do you not realise that our troops are champions of our noble religion? It is because of the horror of your idol worship, your boisterous, bloody methods of prayers, our troops became inspired by their mission to save your foolish people from their uncivilised enslavement to idol worship.

Vinayak Dev: If Muslim forces are such missionaries of God then why did the Muslim forces of the Delhi Sultan invade Bahmani kingdom and fight against fellow Islamic forces? Why did the first Bahmani Sultan welcome the assistance of Hindu Warangal's aid in his fight against his fellow Islamic marauders from Delhi? No, your forces do not fight for Islam. You have no objection to non-aggression pacts

* The world had to wait till 1949 and two world wars and threat of atom-bomb to conclude the Geneva convention for the protection of non-combatants, prisoners-of-war and prevent inhuman persecutions — Ed.

with us when it suits you and you need our friendship. Then you do not mind our idol worship, our sacrifices, our castes and our pantheon of God.

Sultan : How else do you account for your repeated defeats and our successive triumphs? Our faith inspires our masses, our war cry *Allah Ho Akbar* steels, ennobles and raises our forces so high that dame victory embraces us.

Vinayak Dev : So does our faith in Lord Shiva, Mother Kakati, Lord Rama.

Sultan : Ah, your troops are not united. They do not raise one and only one battle cry.

Vinayak Dev : True, there you have a point against us.

Sultan : We have so many advantages. Hence our victories.

Vinayak Dev : You have not always been victorious. Delhi forces had to attempt seven times, without achieving complete victory over our Warangal nayaks ! I was then a boy, when your great Ulugh Khan had to run away to Delhi, leaving his troops to their fate. I gained my first victories, when our troops were driving away the vanquished troops of Tughlak. What a sight Delhi forces then made during their retreat !

Sultan : Our troops have won now! You are our prisoner. Why boast of the past ?

Vinayak Dev : Victory and defeat are the two sides of the same golden plate of fate.

Sultan : Why not we be friends ?

Vinayak Dev : We started being friends. Bahmani became tired of friendship. It does not love arts and ways of peace. It has no compact with God to see Him in humanity. It sees Him only in blood.

Sultan : Do not dare insult our Faith.

Vinayak Dev : How can I, a Hindu, dream of insulting God and anyone's Faith ? But where is your faith in God, in the presence of all these sacrilegious deeds of yours ; we respect Mohammad, but we cannot admire such followers.

Sultan : We alone are not at fault in invading neighbouring domains without provocation.

Vinayak Dev : How? I did not commit that sin.

Sultan : You have laid seize on Kaulas?

Vinayak Dev : It was our precious fort. You captured it, unjustly you turned it into a challenge against our valour. You have held it as a sword in our heart. We had to liberate our heart. So, we wished to pull out that Bahmani sword from our Warangal's heart. How is that an invasion? If we had been content with the loss of Kaulas, we would have been cowards, we would have been untrue to Warangal's Order of Lenkas, their horses and weapons. Indeed, we would have been cursed by our Divine Mother.

Sultan : Yes, your Kakati!

Vinayak Dev : Oh, don't be so contemptuous of Her. You may come to eat the dust of the battle-field as we have done. Let us honour ourselves as heroes—heroism is permanent, though victory may be a fleeting favour.

Sultan : You are so young, so dynamic. We admire you. Why do't you abandon your old father and we can all make a powerful force against Delhi?

Vinayak Dev : How can you suggest that we also should imitate your Delhi's Ulugh Khan and betray my father? We are devoted to the dharma as illustrated by the noble example of Lord Rama.

Sultan Then why did you not honour the non-aggression pact concluded by your father?

Vinayak Dev : It did not include free passage for horses needed by you for waging war against us.

Sultan : Why did you melt down our coins? Is that not a frontal insult? How dare you think we would overlook that?

Vinayak Dev : To honour your coins was not one of the terms of our treaty. Anyhow, it did not cost you anything.

Sultan : It cost us our honour. That is why this war, your defeat and your present pitiable plight.

Vinayak Dev : Why pitiable plight? True, we are defeated. But that is a part of a warrior's life. I am here to embrace death and achieve martyrdom. Do you not believe in the same ideals of soldier? All our nayaks marry first the damsel of Heaven, when we consecrate ourselves to the Order of Lenkas and Nayaks and there after only do they get married to the girls of this earth. None need pity me or any of my noble nayaks and lenkas who are now before you as prisoners. We are ready to die. Please honour yourself by killing us in an honourable manner.

Sultan : But why are you so impatient to die? Why not you advise your father to accept our overlordship?

Vinayak Dev : My father has immortalised himself by freeing Andhra and Dakshinapath from the overlordship of Delhi Muslims.

Sultan : But we are now both opposed to Delhi. Why not make common cause?

Vinayak Dev : To be deceived once again! No, in what way are you better? How is your overlordship less dishonourable to Andhra?

Sultan : We are the Deccanis, Delhi forces may be alien.

Vinayak Dev : You came to our country like Delhi sultans, aduventurers and invaders.

Sultan : Bukka and your father mooted the idea of inviting Delhi Sultan against us! Is not Delhi also alien?

Vinayak Dev : So many of us opposed that idea. But when we found Bahmani so ungrateful, we thought of following the dharma of war and wanted to seek his support against your treachery.

Sultan : So you have no objection to our Islam?

Vinayak Dev : No. Why should we object to Islam or Prophet Mohammad. When we live in peace with people of so many religions and their prophets, we can live in peace with Islam also. But we object to the horrors you perpetrate to satisfy your cupidity, love of power and pelf but all the time invoking sanctions from Islam and Prophet.

Sultan : The nayaks of Recherla, Bhuvanagiri are willing to co-operate with us. Why not you also follow their wise example ?

Vinayak Dev : To follow the path of cowardice, treachery ?

Sultan : How treachery ? Your father is not their king ?

Vinayak Dev : Yes, my father is their *Suratrana.* They are members of the Confederacy. Bahmani is trying to divide our ranks and encourage rebellion among us.

Sultan : That is not different from what your father did when he helped Bahmani against Delhi.

Vinayak Dev : Delhi was our enemy. You have now been trying to disrupt our Confederacy, while pretending to be our friend and neighbour, bound by non-aggression pact.

Sultan : Why not you consider us also as a part of the Confederacy ?

Vinayak Dev : How can we believe your treaties ? How can our masses forget so soon what all you have done to our people ? Oh, God. how to count your sins.

Sultan : How long are you going to treat us as foreign imperialists ? [1]

Vinayak Dev : You and your heirs have to love our languages and learn to honour our dharma, respect our ways of life.

Sultan : But how ?

Vinayak Dev : By treating the people in accordance with the national dharma.

Sultan : What is that dharma ?

Vinayak Dev : Can you ever imagine an Indian behaving as heinously as the Sultan of Malabar has done towards the venerable Veera Ballala ? He is looked upon with the highest

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1. This conflict of interests and controversy over the legitimacy of the rights of citizenship between the 'Desis' (the natives or sons of the soil) and 'Pardesis' (outsiders) grew to be a principal source of weakness

(Contd. on next page)

respect by our people and as the noblest achievement of Bharatiya dharma !

Sultan : But he invaded Malabar and almost starved to death the citizens of Cannanore. Was it dharmic for such an old man to invade neighbouring domain ?

Vinayak Dev : What else have you done when you trespassed into Andhra ?

Sultan : I am young.

Vinayak Dev : In your country, even Ballala who is past 80 years is not too old to hearken to the call of people for redemption from tyranny. The Sultan was a tyrant. So Ballala was practising dharma when he invaded Malabar.

Sultan : Ballala was defeated, he was taken prisoner and he was punished.

VinayakDev : According to our dharma, a prisoner of war should not be treated in a dishonourable way. A king, an old king like him, should be treated honourably, even when he is defeated and he ought not to be tortured in such a cruel manner.

Sultan : No ruler can ensure obedience from people, unlesss he strikes terror into their hearts.

Vinayak Dev : That is exactly the difference between you tyrants and noble kings like Ballala and my father.

(Contd. from p. 201

to the political life of the Muslim ruling classes of the Bahmani kingdom and its three successive kingdoms of the Deccan. The Turks, Afghans, Arabs, Africans, who came first, began to dispute the right of the later immigrant Muslim soldiers, sardars and traders from the same foreign lands. In course of time, all those Muslims inter-married with the local converts and made common cause against north Indian (mainly Uttar Pradesh) Muslims and treated them as non-Mulkis and came to resent prominence obtained by them from successive Nizams in the Services and court.

Even now, many a Telangana politician begrudges the leadership assumed by their brother Andhra politicians even though both Telengana and Andhra have come to be partners in Andhra Pradesh. Indeed, we find such a political problem almost in every state of this secular democracy of India. Assam and other North-eastern States are the latest to suffer from this trouble. — Ed.

Sultan: How dare you call me a tyrant?

Vinayak Dev: Your justification of what happened to Veera Ballala betrays your barbaric standards.

Sultan: Why are you so bitter against us?

Vinayak Dev: Because you do not respect any standards of honour, any gentlemen's agreement. Because, your whim and might take precedence over your dharma.

Sultan: Does your father behave differently?

Vinayak Dev: Yes, he concluded alliances with Ballala, Harihara Raya, the nayaks of Kanchi and Madura. Has he ever broken them? Has he not been going to their rescue whenever demanded? Has he not won their help whenever he asked for it? Did not the Rayas support my father? That is how we observe dharma. But you have betrayed my father's trust in you. You have behaved so ungratefully and treacherously.

Sultan: You utter this word dharma like mantra. What is it exactly in day-to-day administration of a ruler?

Vinayak Dev: To put it briefly, a ruler should never claim as his share more than one-sixth of the net income of produce or achievement of any one or occupation or industry. He should not dispossess an agriculturist of his holding without paying compensation and witout the permission of the village panchayat. He should not dishonour women. You raise land revenue and *sunkums* arbitrarily. In your country, our rulers never ask for anything more than one-sixth net income from land. They never encroach upon the rights of village common-wealths. They do not interfere with the internal social affairs of castes. They respect the rights of temples, never touch their funds or properties. You do not honour any of these social rights, nor do you respect the autonomy of our social organisations.

Sultan: Does your father respect this dharma?

Vinayak Dev: Yes, he never enters a village without the permission of the panchayat. He never commandeers their foodgrains, milk or other properties. He never forces youths

to join the army. He always pays the full price for the purchases made by the army. We do not interfere with people's worship. We pay compensation for any dishonour done or discourtesy shown to women, however humble they may be.

Sultan : What should we do to you, according to dharma?

Vinayak Dev : Kill us, as befitting prisoners of war, but in an honourable manner.

Sultan : Why not you embrace our Islam ?

Vinayak Dev : We are happy to die as Hindus. We are not such traitors as Gannama Nayak or Jagannatha Panditha.

Sultan : Have you no duties towards Bahmani kingdom ?

Vinayak Dev : Such duties can only be mutual.

Sultan : You have rebelled against us ?

Vinayak Dev : I have never accepted you as my king or sultan.

Sultan : So many Hindu Brahmins have embraced Islam. Look at Jagannatha Panditha.

Vinayak Dev : If they have done it out of their free will we can honour them. But who has done it that way ? You believe in forcible conversions.

Sultan : Your people also forcibly converted Buddhists into Hindus. Vaishnavaites and Saivaites convert each other.

Vinayak Dev : We have learnt to be civilised. We no longer indulge in such brutal persecutions.

Sultan . Can there be no basis for understanding among us ?

Vinayak Dev : On what basis ?

Sultan : Let Warangal accept our suzerainty. Let your father become one of our nayaks.

Vinayak Dev : Not while I am alive. My father would rather commit suicide.

Sultan : What is your objection ?

(All these are enshrined in the inscriptions on temple walls, copper-plates.-Ed.)

Virayak Dev : Bahmani is only few decades old. Warangal is many centuries old, your sultanate has arisen out of Delhi Sultanate which has only pillage, plunder, rape and rapacity as its achievements. Our Kakatiya House has arisen from Chalukya and Chola Houses, which sprang from Rashtrakuta and Pallava Houses. All of us trace our ancestry from Mahabharata and Ramayana heroes How can we bend our knees before Bahmani?

Sultan So, you refuse to hail Bahmani Sultan as your sovereign?

Vinayak Dev · I would rather loose my tongue!

Sultan : What do you say, if I take you at your own word.

Vinayak Dev : If you want to descend to that level of the beasts.

Sultan ; I have done my best to be generous. You refuse to bend, to compromise, to be reasonable. You do not deserve to be freed, because you cannot be a statesman. So, I am ordering that your tongue should be severed. You should not be allowed to talk any more about your useless dharma.

Vinayak Dev · I am not shocked What else can we expect from beasts? You may take away my tongue. Thank you, you have allowed me to talk enough. Hereafter every pore of my body will talk as if it has assumed the thousand tongues and wisdom of our God Adisesha.

Sultan : Alright, I shall see that your body is blown to thousands of bits, as you have likened yourself to your snake· Have you any other desire?

Vinayak Dev : Again, I demand, as your prisoner of war, to be put to death, befitting a warrior, if you wish to behave as a warrior.

Sultan : Otherwise?

Vinayak Dev : My people would know, my noble father would realise that they have allowed an earthly, poisonous snake to escape from Delhi's fangs only to poison and destroy themselves.

Sultan : You must be punished, treated according to your arrogant wishes; your tongue will be cut off as a punishment for uttering so much blasphemy. Your body should be blown up by our catapult and every bit strewn from its mouth.

Vinayak Dev : You can only destroy my body. You can't destroy dharma. Every word you have made me utter and every thought of freedom I have cherished, will go on reverberating, to make people become free, strong and happy. We believe that our spirit live for ever if it pulsates with God and dharma. Jai Kakatiya ancestors, Jai Pratapa Rudra, Jai Prolaya.

After having ordered the punishment and after destroying the mortal body of Vinayak Dev, the Sultan began to admire the spirit of self-sacrifice and strength of conviction, displayed by that noble Kakatiya youth. He felt a strange admiration for Vinayak Dev's exemplification of dharma and felt like adopting it as the constitutional order of Bahmani.

However, Mohammad Shah had to pay a heavy price for the cruel and satanic punishment inflicted upon that prince. Let us note what Somasekhara Sarma says about the passionate loyalty of the people of Vinayak Dev's domian:[2] "Hiding themselves during the day-time and coming out of their messes during the night, they harassed the Sultan so much that he was compelled to order his men to burn the baggage together with the plunder, excepting jewels and gold, in order to effect rapid marches and escape from their attacks; by the time the Sultan reached Kaulas, only one-third of his army was left alive and even the king himself received a wound in his arm."

2. M. Somasekhara Sarma, op. cit
Vinayak Dev was also known to the Muslim historians as Nagdev. He is said to have been taken as prisoner by Sultan Mohammad Shah of Bahamani. "When the Rajah was brought before the Sultan, he was asked why he had dared to seize horses which were on their way to Gulbarga. The Hindu Prince is said to have given an insolent reply which so enraged Sultan that he ordered Nagdev to be shot from an engine into a burning pile of wood which barbarous sentencce was duly carried out". (J.D.B. Gribble, "History of the Deccan", Vol. I, p. 37)

Ali Adil Shah of Gulbarga married a Gowda princess, Rani Boobooji Khanum. She gave her three daughters in marriage to the princes of the three Bahmani kingdoms and thus helped these ruling families to become atleast partly Indianised in blood.

The Golconda nawabs and their Muslim nobles realised the need for national integration and social harmony between themselves and their Hindu masses. So, Nizam Ibrahim (1550–80) began to adapt the Sultan's dress to that of the local Hindu rajas. Mohammad Khuli Qutb Shah (1582–1611), builder of Hyderabad and Charminar dared to give up their traditional beard. He avowed his patriotic loyalty to Telangana and Dakshinapath in his poems and songs. Many of the Nizams took pride in welcoming to their courts celebrated Telugu poets, accepted dedication of their books of devotional songs and poems, written in praise of Hindu Gods. One of them Ibrahim Kutb Shah became so popular among Telugu pundits and poets. Several poets like Addanki Gangadhara, Kandukuru Rudra, Maringanti Singaacharya were patronised by Ibrahim

Mohammad Khuli Qutb Shah was the son of Ibrahim by his Hindu queen. He gave further fillip to the growing tendency among Muslim feudal chiefs and Hindu officers to jointly celebrate the Hindu and Muslim spring (Holi), Dussera, Id and Muharram festivals.

No wonder, Sultan Abdul Hassan Qutb Shah (Tanisha, 1672–87) was able to appreciate the complete devotion of Andhra bhakta and poet Ramadas, to Lord Rama, as incarnated in the temple at Bhadrachalam and excuse him for having devoted the State revenue to the construction of that temple. The Nizam's government had ever since accepted the responsibilities of the trustee to that temple, though he and his successors have been devote Muslims. Such was also the Indian synthesis, developed by bhakta Kabir and the Kabir Panth.

He appointed two Hindu Brahmin brothers, Akkanna, Madanna as prime minister and commander-in-chief. They tried to encourage many Hindus to join the service of the Qutb Shahi government. This laudable effort of the sultans was disliked by the begoted Emperor of Delhi, Aurangazeb and provided the most important pretext for his invasion of Andhra and the capture of Golconda and final annexation of Andhra to the Delhi empire in 1687.

C. VEERA BALLALA III

Veera Ballala (1291–1342) was presented to the Sultan's governor in Malbar and Madura at his war camp in Madura, as the prized prisoner of war. He was taken captive along with so many of his nayaks, by the Sultan's troops, after having overwhelmed his forces, in a surprise attack on them, before the Cannanore fort.[1]

Veera Ballala : Qutb-ud-Din saheb, please treat us as prisoners of war should be treated.

Qutb-ud-din (Sultan's governor) How are such old warriors and war-weary princes like you to be treated? We wish to be generous to you, in view of your heroism and old age. How is it, your love of warfare has not been appeased even after having taken part in so many wars? Are you prepared to embrace Islam as your Faith and make us feel that you can also be our elder?

Veera Ballala No. Why do you want this old man of 80 years of age to commit such a sacrilege. Do I not deserve to die in the embrace of my own Faith? Can you not allow me to die with the name of my God on my lips?

Qutb-ud-din We want you to embrace Islam because such an old man, the warrior of so many battles can set excel-

1 Veera Ballala of Hoysala was obliged to wage war sometimes against Kampili both before and after Harihara and Bukka Raya took charge of it. Pratapa Rudra's forces invaded Dwarasamudram and were once overcome and were persuaded to return on another occasion, by offering nominal tribute. Malik Kafur invaded Hoysala kingdom and received tribute On the fall of Warangal, Hoyasala also had to bow before the invaders Thus all the time, Ballala of Hoysala "had to pursue a policy of alternately submitting to the superior power and trying to re-establish his authority" ("History and Culture of Indian People" Vol. V, p. 232)

lent example to the youger people. In that way, you can help your people in the few moments or years left to you to follow the right path.

Veera Ballala : It is just because I have lived so long in the holy path of Vedas, I do not wish to commit blasphemy by abandoning our sacred religion. I respect your love of your Faith. I have long admired how your forces rush to death with the name of our Allah on their lips.

Qutb-ud-din : Why are you so keen on forcing me to inflict a heavy punishment ?

Veera Ballala : I am tired of this life. I have lived my full span of life in doing good to huminity and serving my sacred land. Have I not risked my life so many times in resisting the invasion of our lands by Malik Kafur ? Did I not aid my Acharya Vidyaranya and others in persuading the princely brothers, Harihara Raya, Bukka Raya to return to the path of our Bharatiya dharma ? The whole of Dakshinapath is greatful to me for having co-operated with our cousins, the Warangal nayaks from our sister Kakatiya House in liberating our country from the Delhi imperialists. What more can I hope to live for ?

Qutb-ud-din : Are you not repentent for having pursued such a barren path ?

Veera Ballala : My life has not been a failure.

Qutb ud-din : You are too old and so, too blind to realise how you and your stupid followers and confederates have failed so miserably. You drove away Delhi's viceroy and governors by inciting the people against Islamic forces. But have you not had to reconcile yourselves to the neighbourliness of the Bhamani Sultan ! You made peace with your traditional opponnents from Kampili, even though they had cheated two religions. Where is the guarantee that they would not join us once again, now that we are again victorious. Why do you fail to see your blatant failure ?

Veera Ballala : If I am so blind to facts and in age, why do you want me to beg for a few more years of life by betraying my Faith. Why do you want me to lend the weight of may name to your oppressive rule, desecration of your temples and inhuman treatment of our people? See how inhumanly your officers have treated our people "Our women were slain along with their children, their hair being tied to the stakes.[2] Please liberate us from this world, as befitting prisoners of war.

Qutb-ud-Din : Why should we accord to you the honours due to prisoners of war? Were you not responsible for invading Cannanore and reducing our people in the fort to extreme degrees of suffering? You deserve no mercy.

Veera Ballala I do not ask for your mercy I have not learnt to bend my knees before any earthly authority.

Qutb-ud-Din : Is this the first time that you had to present yourself before a victor? Have you not submitted to the Cholas, Chalukyas and Kakatiyas? When were you an independent raja? Why do you boast like this?

Veera Ballala : I am not boasting. When I accepted the overlordship of Chola or Chalukya or Kakatiya prince successively, they never forced me to accept their earthly superior authority but only to submit to our all-embracing dharma, of which each one of us is the instrument, by wielding its sceptre at different levels. I never had to surrender my people to the kind of oppression that your foreign regime is imposing on our people nor had I to give up my kingdom or kingship

Qutb-ud-Din : Yes, you Hindus are experts in deceiving yourselves, through your foolish metaphysics. How do you justify your subordination to the nayak Confederacy, which never had a crown or throne or which was never consecrated in a religious function, as happens when any of you is enthroned?

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2. This happened in Malbar, in the region of Qutb-ud-Din as borne out by Ibn Batutah — "History and Culture of Indian People" Vol. V, p. 234.

they have reached you, if I had not observed our national dharma towards such fugitives. How did you return that courtesy? Not by allowing the beseized people to surrender; Not even by giving me due notice of your refusal to let them surrender and your decision to fight me. On the other hand, you have come upon us by deceit; overcome our troops by strategem and cheated us in return for our charity and mercy. This is the difference between our dharmic and your brutish orders. I prefer to die a martyr, as a challenge to your illegitimate authority. Let me serve through my death the cause of our dharma.

Qutb-ud-Din: Do not think I will allow your death to serve as another encouragement to your people to rebel against us? I will punish you in such an unparallelled manner that the thought of your miserable death will strike terror into the hearts of millions, for ages to come.

Veera Ballala: You would do a favour to all our people by spelling out through your own words, what is the satanic sentence of yours.

Qutb-ud-Din: We will blind you and skin you and after your death, we will tan your skin, stuff it with grass and hang it by the fort gate, so that its sight will strike terror into the hearts of all and as a warning to every potential rebel.

Veera Ballala: Thank you for justifying my defiance against your alien, un-dharmic authority. I hereby decide upon consecrating my earthly being to Lord Yama Dharma. I offer myself to my Universal Mother. I hereby die. Do your worst to this body. I go into *yoga*. I can no longer feel anything of this world's atmosphere. Jai Bharatiya Dharma.

EPILOGUE

It is only recently that we have come to know, from a historical view point, that descendants of Annama Deva, brother of Prataparudra Deva of Warangal who preferred to go across the Godavari after the first fall of Kakatiya Kingdom and founded the state of Bastar have acclaimed their descent from Kakatiyas. The last of them to have held sway over that tribal area was the late Bhanja Deo, who merged the Bastar state in the independent realm of India.

The Kakatiyas are known till now to have derived their name from their worship of Goddess Kakati. Only now we have come to know that there used to be a tribe known as Kakati and their totem or tribal Goddess was Kakati. There is actually a Member of Parliament from NEFA, known as Kakati, that is, bearing the name of his tribe and tribal Goddess. Therefore the Kakatiyas must have been one of the ancient tribal people of our country. We can only assume that as it had happened with other tribal people, the Kakati tribal people must have gone on moving about from place to place in accordance to the vicissitudes of agricultural development, social and political fortunes. They achieved a Kingdom of their own, first as feudal vassals of Rashtrakutas, then of Chalukyas and Cholas and eventually as independent rulers. Kakatiyas like other tribal people must have gained their place, their feudal eminence as generals or Nayaks and army personnel in general, among the forces of our successive rulers in different parts or Kingdom within India. But such of them as would not like to be merged in the mainstream of Indian Puranic gradation of castes preferred to maintain their social and political independence of tribalism. And fortunately one of their leaders Mr. Kakati has at long last come to be elected as the member of the present Indian Parliament. Their fellow tribals, who were in social and/or marital conjugality and political alliance must have found it useful and politically uplifting to be known as Kakatiyas, in general, especially as the Hindu priests were ready to recognise them as Kshatriyas. How and when some of them found their way to reach Nagaland or to migrate from Nagaland or North-eastern India to such place or places in the Deccan plateau is not known to us.

PRINCIPAL DATES

A.D. 1017–1137	Ramanuja.
1050	Nannaya, Author of Telugu Mahabharata.
1150–1163–1170	Basava, the Social Revolutionary.
1130	Prola Raja built Warangal Fort.
1163–1199	Pratapa Rudra I built Thousand Pillared Temple of Hanumakonda.
1156–1167	Bijjala of Kalachurya (end of reign).
1070–1122	Kulottunga I Tamil cum Telugu Chola Emperor.
1176–1184	Palnad War.
1170–1194	Jaichandra, King of Kanauj, Rathor Dynasty.
1191	Prithviraj Chauhan defeated and severely wounded Muhammad of Ghur (First Battle of Tarain).
1192	Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated and killed in the war with Muhammad of Ghur (Second Battle of Tarain).
1199–1261 or 1262	Ganapati Deva.
1206	Qutb-ud-din-Aibak became Sultan of Delhi.
1206–1290	Delhi Slave Dynasty.
1216–1248	Chola Rajaraja III, Decline of the Cholas.
1235	Anugu Raja (Feudatory of Ganapati Deva).
1238–1317	Madhavacharya.
1246–1266	Nasir-ud-din Mahmud.
1262–1295	Rudrama.
1266–1287	Ghias-ud-din Balban (Ulugh Khan).
1275	Visit of Marcopolo.
1290–1296	Jalal-ud-din.

1294	Devagiri of Yadavas was attacked by the army of Ala-ud-din the Governor of Kara and Manikpur and nephew and Son-in-law of Jalal-ud-din.
1296–1316	Ala-ud-din Khalji.
1302–1303	Capture of Chittore by Ala-ud-din.
1303	First invasion of Warangal by Malik Kafur.
1306	Yadavas of Devagiri were defeated.
1309	Prataparudra sued for peace.
1308–1311	Malik Kafur's campaign.
1312	Yadava Sankara rebelled.
1315	Pratapa Rudra declared his independence.
1316	Ala-ud-din died. Muppidi Nayaka captured Kanchi.
1316–1320	Mubarak Shah, Delhi Sultan.
1317	Extinction of Yadava dynasty under Harapala deva.
1320	Khusru Khan invaded Telangana.
1320–1325	Ghias-ud-din Tughluq.
1322–1323	Two invasions on Telangana by Delhi forces under the leadership of Ulugh Khan (Muhammad-bin Tughluq).
1323	Pratapa Rudra was taken Prisoner.
1325–1351	Muhammad-bin-Tughluq (Ulugh Khan).
1327	Vira Ballala was also organising resistance against Muslims. Tughluq sent an expedition to South India.
1330–1344	Nayak Confederation – Revolution.
1335–1345	Kapaya held Warangal.
1336–1337	Prolaya's revolution.
1336	Foundation of Vijayanagar.
1340	Prolaya died.

1341	Ghias-ud-din Dhama Ghani became Sultan of Madura.
	Ibn Batuta's (Historian) visit to India.
1342	Vira Ballala's martyrdom.
1344	Hindu princes began again to fight the rest of the Muslim conquerors.
1347	Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah was crowned.
1350	Bahmani Ala-ud-din invaded Telengana
1350–1368	Tanisha, Sultan of Hyderabad.
1351	Muhammad-bin-Tughluq died
1351–1388	Firuz Shah – said after two campaigns "Never more to make war upon men of Muhammadan faith."
1356	Kaulas was given up by Kapaya. Treaty with Ala-ud-din of Gulbarga.
1358	Ala-ud-din Bahmani died.
1362	Vinayak Dev laid seize of Kaulas. Muhammad Shah defeated Vinayak Dev and Bukka Raya.
	Vinayak Dev's martyrdom.
	Bukka Raya appealed to Firuz Tughluq of Delhi for help.
1364	Mohammad Shah again invaded Warangal and defeated Kapaya.
	Kapaya's treaty with Muhammad Shah of Gulbarga.
	Golconda was ceded to Bahmanis.
1372–1373	Kapaya died.
1398	Timur's invasion.
1424	Gulbarga Sultan, Ahmed Shah, invaded Telangana, defeated its King and captured Warangal again.
1428	Revolt suppressed.

1434	Again Telangana Nayaks rebelled.
1500–1504	Sitapati Raju captured Warangal.
1509	Portuguese were confirmed in Goa.
1529–30	Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar died.
1556–1605	Akbar's rule.
1565	Fall of Vijayanagar at Talikota battle.

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